Counsel and Help

J. R. Miller

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COUNSEL AND HELP

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

HELP FOR THE DAY

By J. R. MILLER, D.D.

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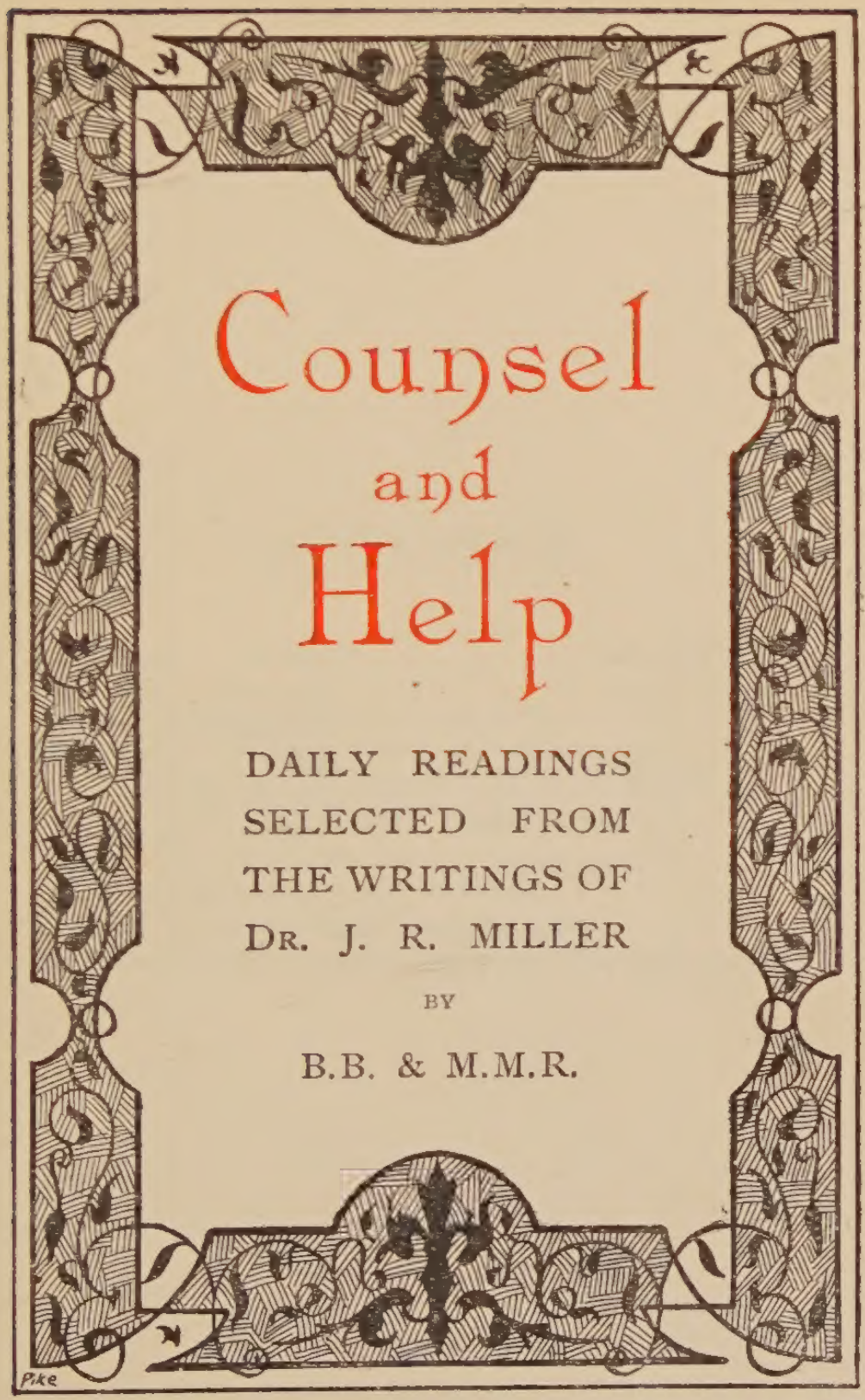


LONDON THE PILGRIM PRESS
16 PILGRIM STREET E.C.4

Published . . . . . *October* 1907
Reprinted . . . . . *November* 1907
" . . . . . *December* 1910
" . . . . . *July* 1914
" . . . . . *September* 1919
" . . . . . *August* 1925

Printed in Great Britain

JANUARY

I would converse with Thee from day to day,
With heart intent on what Thou hast to say,
And through my pilgrim-walk, whate'er befall
Consult with Thee, O Lord! about it all.
Since Thou art willing thus to condescend
To be my intimate, familiar friend,
Oh! let me to the great occasion rise,
And count Thy friendship life's most glorious prize!

JANUARY

Jan. 1.

TRUE RELIGION IS MODEST.

THE religion of Christ teaches the most beautiful courtesy. We are not to seek to be ministered unto, but to minister; not to get distinction and praise, but to live quietly. Kossuth said that of all natural emblems he would choose for his life the dew. It makes no noise, seeks no praise, writes no record, but is content to sink away and be lost in the flowers and grass blades, to be remembered only in the new beauty and sweetness it imparts to nature. Those who always demand that they shall be recognised, and their name attached to everything they do, have not learned the mind of Christ so well as have those who are content to have Christ honoured, to do good to others, and to be remembered only in the new blessing and good which they leave in other lives.

Jan. 2.

SEEING WITH KINDLY EYES.

WE should seek for the best and the noblest in everyone we meet, and then strive to call it out. One who was asked how to cultivate this charm of character replied: "Look at everything through kindly eyes." If we do this there will be no more envy, no more jealousy, no more censoriousness, no more uncharitableness; having pure, generous love in our heart, we shall find in every other life something beautiful, at least something that through the kindly nourishing of our love may grow into beauty. Thus we shall really call on every nature for its best.

Jan. 3.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

JOY brightens a life. It shines in the face like sunlight. It makes the eyes sparkle. But what is this joy that is a fruit of the Spirit? Anybody can be joyous when all things go well, when health is good, and business is prosperous, and the cup of love runs over, and the circle of friends is unbroken. The joy the Holy Spirit gives lives on in the heart when all earthly sources of gladness have failed. It hides like a rainbow in the bosom of the darkest cloud, and shines out in the gloom.

Jan. 4.

THE BEST TALISMAN.

EVERYONE carries in himself the sources of his own happiness or wretchedness. Circumstances have really very little to do with our inner experiences. It matters little in the determination of one's degree of enjoyment whether he live in a cottage or a palace. It is self, after all, that in largest measure gives the colour to our skies, and the tone to the music we hear. A happy heart sees rainbows and brilliance everywhere, even in darkest clouds, and hears sweet strains of song even amid the loudest wailing of the storm; and a sad heart, unhappy and discontented, sees spots in the sun, specks in the rarest fruits, and something with which to find fault in the most perfect of God's works, and hears discords and jarring notes in the heavenliest music.

Jan. 5.

THE MINISTRY OF JOY.

JOYFULNESS is everywhere commanded as a Christian duty. Discontent is a most detestable fault. Morbidness is a sin. Fretfulness grieves God. It tells of unbelief. It destroys the soul's peace. It disfigures the beauty of Christian character. It not only makes us soured and unhappy in our own hearts,

but its influence on others is bad. We have no right to project the gloom of our discontent over any other life. Our ministry is to be ever toward joy. There is nothing so depressing in its effect upon others as morbidness. Hence, for the sake of those among whom we live, and upon whose lives we are for ever unconsciously either casting shadows or pouring sunshine, we should seek to learn this Christian art of contentment.

Jan. 6.

THE RENEWED LIFE.

WE are not of this world, if we are Christians; we belong to the kingdom of heaven. It is very easy for us, being in the world, to become of it, to let our lives grow like the world. But this is not the way to make ourselves a living sacrifice to God. "It is not conformity that we want," says Dr. Bushnell; "it is not being able to beat the world in its own way; but it is to stand apart and above it, and to produce the impression of a holy and separate life. This only is safety and success."

Instead, then, of conforming to the world, taking the world's colour, our duty is to seek to be transformed into the heavenly life. The word "transformed" means to be transfigured, that is, to become bright and shining in our life.

The secret of it is given in the words, "the renewing of your minds." The candle is to be lighted within our hearts, that its beams may shine out through our life, making it glow.

Jan. 7.

SOWING SEEDS OF LOVE.

EVERY kindness we do to another in the name of Christ is the sowing of a good seed unto the Spirit. Every deed of love, every act of unselfishness, every self-denial—all the things we do to help, to comfort, or to bless others are seeds which we sow unto the Spirit. "In due season we shall reap." For a time it may not appear that any good or blessing comes from the act of love or the word of kindness spoken. But the seed does not perish; it has in it an immortal germ.

Jan. 8.

WORK NOT ALWAYS SERVICE.

IT is possible to live a very laborious life filled with intense activities, and yet never, from youth to old age, do one deed that Christ accepts as service. It is possible even to live a life of what is called religious service, full of what are regarded as sacred duties, and yet never in one thing truly serve Christ. The heart may never have been given to Him at all.

Or the motives may have been wrong. That which makes any act distinctively a Christian act is that it is done in the name of Christ, and to please Him.

Jan. 9.

COMFORT IN LONELINESS.

LONELINESS is one of the most pathetic of human experiences. The yearning for companionship is one of the deepest of all yearnings. The religion of Christ has something to meet every human need; what is its blessing for loneliness? We may turn to the Master's own life for answer to our question. He met all the experiences that ever become ours, and He found for Himself the best there is to be found in the divine love to meet His experiences. Thus He showed us what we may find in our times of need, and how we may find it.

Jan. 10.

MINISTERING SPIRITS

SOMETIMES it is poverty that stands at our gate, and money help is wanted. But a thousand times more frequently it is not money, but something else more precious that we must give. It may be loving sympathy. Sorrow is before us. Another's heart is breaking. Money would be of no use; it would be only

a bitter mockery. But we can hold to the sufferer's lips a cup filled out of our own heart, which will give new strength. Or it is the anguish of a life struggle, a human Gethsemane, beside which we are called to watch. We can give no actual aid—the soul must fight its battles alone; but we can be as the angel who ministered in our Lord's Gethsemane, imparting strength and helping the weary struggler to win the victory.

Jan. 11.

THE GLORY OF THE CROSS.

PAUL teaches us by example how to wear chains for Christ. He counted it a glory. It was that chained hand that wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, the most cheerful and joyous of the Apostle's letters. Paul's sweetest songs came from his prison.

We shall not likely have the privilege of wearing literal chains for Christ, but there are many hindrances and limitations and hardships in every Christian life that are really chains upon us. Sickness sometimes shuts us in. Poverty binds the hands of many. Household cares keep many a woman in chains. Few Christians are absolutely free to do what their hearts prompt them to do for Christ. We should study Paul, and gather the lesson of rejoicing, of cheerfulness, of contentment, of usefulness. Paul's prison life was not idle. He

sent out continually from his place of captivity blessings for men. The influence poured out into all the world.

Jan. 12.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

THE beauty of the Lord in a human life is not merely a heavenly yearning. It is intensely practical. It is more than religious sentimentality, more than devout feeling, more than holy aspiration. True spiritual longing draws the whole life upward with it. True holiness does not unfit people for living well in this world. It has its visions of Christ, but it brings them down to brighten its daily path and to become inspirations to beautiful living. It has its joyful emotions, but they become impulses to self-denial and patient work for the Master.

Jan. 13.

CHRIST EVERYWHERE.

WE ought to learn that Jesus is in every providence that comes to us. He does not come in the sunshine only; quite as frequently it is in the shadow that He draws nigh. It is our duty as Christians to train ourselves to see Christ in each event. Then whether it be sorrow or joy that knocks at our door, we shall give it like loving welcome,

knowing that Jesus Himself is veiled in whatever form it is that enters. Then we shall find that when we welcome Him in the sombre garments of pain, He has always a rich blessing for our lives.

Jan. 14.

THE SOUL'S NEED OF QUIET.

THERE are some people who claim that they can pray and commune with God just as well in one place as in another. They do their praying while they walk about and while they work. They see no use in going apart to pray. Surely, if anyone could pray well in a crowd, or while engaged in work, Jesus could. No doubt He did hold communion with His Father even in His busiest hours, but this did not meet all the needs and longings of His soul. He left the crowd, left even His own disciples, and retired into places where no eye but God's could see Him, where no human footfall or voice could interrupt the quiet of His soul, and where He would be absolutely alone. Surely if he required such conditions in praying, we do too. We need to find a place for prayer, in which nothing can intrude to break the continuity of thought or devotion. "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray."

Jan. 15.

CHRISTLIKE LOVE.

IF we love others as Christ loves them, we will seek always to please them. We will never speak superciliously. We will never reveal vanity or self-conceit in our intercourse with those about us. There is a way of criticising and reproving that is offensive and impertinent. Love gives us no right to judge and condemn. It does not authorise us to watch others or to treat them censoriously. If we have love in our hearts we will seek to save others from sin, to restrain them from wrong-doing, but we will do even these services in loneliness and love, so as to win and not to lose those we reprove. Humility will mark our every word and act. We will always be gentle and kind, speaking in love when we must say anything unpleasant, anything that will give pain.

Jan. 16.

A TRUE CONSCIENCE.

IF only we get the full force of the truth of resurrection, as Paul got it, it will give us double inspiration for a true and holy life. It will stand on the one hand as a warning angel with drawn sword to turn us back from the way to sin and death, while on the other hand it will woo us with ineffable tenderness and

persuasiveness toward the gates of heaven and everlasting life. We need to learn how to live conscientiously. We should train ourselves to do it, by hard discipline, until at length we shall unconsciously obey every gentlest impulse of conscience. A true conscience keeps itself void of offence, both toward God and men. Some people are devout toward God, and yet selfish and mean toward men. Others are philanthropic and benevolent toward men, and yet pay God no homage, no love, no service. Both these are wrong ways of living. If we love God, we will love our brother also; if we love our brother truly, we will love God also.

Jan. 17.

A LIVING SAVIOUR.

WE are in the habit of saying that Christ saved us by dying for us on the Cross. In an important sense this is true. We never could have been saved if He had not died for us. But we are actually saved by our relation to a living, loving, personal Saviour, into whose hands we commit all the interests of our lives, and who becomes our friend, our helper, our keeper, our care-taker, our all in all. Christian faith is not merely laying our sins on the Lamb of God and trusting to His one great sacrifice: it is the laying of ourselves on the living, loving

heart of one whose friendship becomes thenceforward the sweetest joy of our lives.

Jan. 18

THE NEED OF SUFFERING.

WE are apt to be heedless of the feelings of others, to forget how many hearts are sore and carry heavy burdens. We have no sympathy with infirmity, because we do not know from experience what it means. We are not gentle toward sorrow, because our own hearts never have been ploughed. We must walk in the deep valleys ourselves, and then we can be guides to other souls. We must feel the strain, and carry the burden, and endure the struggle ourselves, and then we can be touched, and can give help to others in life's sore stress and poignant need.

Jan. 19.

THE MISSION OF THE TONGUE.

THE tongue's power to do good is simply incalculable. It can impart valuable knowledge; it can speak words that will shine like lamps in darkened hearts; it can pronounce kindly sentences that will comfort sorrow or cheer despondency; it can breathe thoughts that will arouse, inspire, and quicken heedless souls, and even whisper the divine secret of life-giving

energy to spirits that are dead. What good we could do with our tongues, if we would use them to the full limit of their power for good, no one can compute.

Jan. 20.

SINS OF OMISSION.

"WE have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." Perhaps we do not often think of it, however, as really sinful not to do things. We admit that it is wrong to treat another unkindly: do we understand that it is wrong also not to show the kindness we had the call to show? We know it is sinful to speak a harsh or bitter word to another; do we always remember that it is a sin not to say the word of cheer or comfort we had the opportunity to say, and which our neighbour so much needed and longed to hear? If we must give account for idle words, we must also give account for idle silences.

Jan. 21.

HUMBLE SERVICE.

THERE is a beautiful story of the boyhood of Agassiz. The family lived in Switzerland. One day Louis and a younger brother were crossing a lake near their home,

and came to a crack in the ice which the smaller boy could not leap over. The older one then laid himself down across the crack, making a bridge of his body, and his brother climbed over on him. There is need all the while for human bridges over gaps and yawning crevices, and let no one say that this is asking too much even of love. We remember that the Master said He was a way, a bridge, that He laid His precious life across the great impassable chasm between sin and heaven, that men might walk over on Him, from death to life. If it was fit that the Master should make of Himself such a bridge, can any service we may be called to do in helping others be too costly, too humbling?

Jan. 22.

THE USES OF ADVERSITY.

IT is often in sorrow that our lives are taught their sweetest songs. There is a story of a German baron who stretched wires from tower to tower of his castle, to make a great æolian harp. Then he waited and listened to hear the music from it. For a time the air was still and no sound was heard. The wires hung silent in the air. After a while came gentle breezes, and the harp sang softly. At length came the stern winter winds, strong and stormlike in their forces. Then the wires

gave forth majestic music which was heard near and far. There are human lives that never, in the calm of quiet days, yield the music that is in them. When the breezes of common care sweep over them they give out soft murmurings of song. But it is only when the storms of adversity blow upon them that they answer in notes of noble victoriousness. It takes sore trouble to bring out the best that is in them.

Jan. 23.

GIVING BETTER THAN RECEIVING.

WE are apt to complain if our friends do not return as deep, rich, and constant love as we give them. We feel hurt at any evidence of the ebbing of love in them, when they fail us in some way, when we think they have not been altogether faithful and unselfish, or when they have been thoughtless and ungentle toward us. But Christ saw in "His own" a very feeble return for His deep love for them, a most inadequate requital of all His wondrous goodness and grace. They were inconstant, weak, unfaithful. They were ungentle. Yet He continued to love them in spite of all that He found unbeautiful and unworthy in them. And this is the friendship He would teach His disciples.

Jan. 24.

WE CAN DO WHAT WE MUST.

WHEN duty calls we have nothing whatever to do with hindrances and difficulties. It is ours only to obey, even though obedience seem impossible. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." God waits to come to us with divine help. He will not come while we sit still in weakness and fear; but the moment we begin to try to obey His voice His power begins to flow into our heart. Then, as we go on, He works in us and with us. He prepares the way for us. The obstacle gives way to the pressure of our feet. The gate opens when we put the key of faith into the lock. The river sinks away as we tread the edge of its waters. The mountains are levelled as we move on. We pass to the radiant heights that beckon us, and possess our land flowing with milk and honey, in whose hills are rich treasures.

Jan. 25.

NO REWARD WITHOUT LABOUR.

NOTHING beautiful or worthy in any department of life was ever achieved or attained without toil. "Wherever a great thought is born, there also has been Gethsemane." The lovely works of human

creation which people linger before with admiring wonder have all cost a great price. Somebody's heart's blood has gone into every great picture, into every stanza of sweet song, into every paragraph which inspires men. It has been noted that the Anglo-Saxon root of the word bless is the word for blood. We can bless another in deep and true ways only by giving of our life-blood. Anything that will do real good can be wrought only in tears and suffering.

Jan. 26.

WORK THE HEALER.

GOD does not desire us to waste our life in tears. We are to put our grief into new energy of service. Sorrow should make us more reverent, more earnest, more helpful to others. God's work should never be allowed to suffer while we stop to weep. The fires must still be kept burning on the altar, and the worship must go on. The work in the household, in the school, in the store, in the field, must be taken up again,—the sooner the better.

Jan. 27.

HEAVEN WITHIN US.

"THE Kingdom of Heaven is within you," said the Master. It is not something that grows up by a man, alongside the man's

natural life, and apart from it,—it is a new principle that is brought into his life whose function it is to infuse itself into all parts of his nature, permeating all his being, expelling whatever is not beautiful or worthy, and itself becoming the man's real life. "Christ liveth in me," said St. Paul, "and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith."

Jan. 28.

SAY THE KIND WORD NOW.

IT is right to praise people when they do well. Hearty, cheerful, sincere commendation is good everywhere. It is good in homes. Approval encourages and stimulates to better service in the future. It is good for teachers to commend their pupils who are doing what they can. It is proper for ministers to speak in commendation of their congregations when they have shown fidelity and earnestness. Our Lord gave us the example when He commended Mary, saying, "She hath done what she could." Too many people seem afraid ever to say a kindly word to others about what they have done. When a person dies there is no lack of commendation; but what does the dead man care for such words? Many a time along his years, when he was weary and overburdened, if the thousandth part of the kindly things spoken

by his coffin had been spoken in his ear, he would have been cheered and strengthened by the approval.

Jan. 29.

THE HEARING EAR.

IT has been said that we have two ears and only one mouth, to teach us that we should hear twice as much as we speak. We miss a great deal by not being good listeners. The world is full of sweet music—bird songs, the chirping of insects, the sweet murmur of all nature, the breathing of the wind through the trees, the plashing of the waters; and yet some people never hear one melodious sound as they go through the fields and forests.

God is ever speaking in our ears—in conscience, in His word, in the gentle voice of His Spirit; but many of us miss all this wonderful divine speech. We ought to train ourselves to listen, to be "swift to hear." Truth comes to us from all sides. Wordsworth says—

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears"

Unless we go about ever listening we may miss many a valuable lesson, turning away unawares many an angel who comes from God with a message for us.

Jan. 30.

LIFE'S PURPOSE.

LIVING is fraught with far more danger than dying. Think what life is. It is not merely getting through this world in the best way we can. We are not here to make a living but to make a life, to grow, to do God's will, to leave at least one spot of the world a little brighter and better. Every step of the passage from birth to death is through perils and antagonisms. Yet we have the assurance that even life, with all it holds of danger and conflict, cannot separate us from the love of God; that in all these things we may be more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Jan. 31.

OUR TASK OF HEALING.

THE world is full of sorrow, which needs comfort; of bruised and broken lives, which need healing; of weary and heavy-laden ones, who need hope and cheer. If Jesus were here again, He would Himself give out blessings which should meet all these wants and cravings. He is here in the lives of His followers. And if we who bear Christ's name fail to give to men in our measure what Christ would give if He were here again in person, we fail Christ and disappoint Him. His heart yearns to give out

comfort, cheer, love, and strength to all who need it, and if we are not fruitful branches ministering to earth's hungry ones what He would pass through us to them, we grieve Him, and those go hungry still, uncomforted, unhelped, unblessed, who might have been made to rejoice if we had done our part.

FEBRUARY

One look of that pale, suffering face
Will make us feel the deep disgrace
Of weakness:
We shall be sifted till the strength
Of self-conceit be changed at length
To meekness.

Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache;
The reddening scars remain, and make
Confession;
Lost innocence returns no more:
We are not what we were before
Transgression.

But noble souls, through dust and heat,
Rise from disaster and defeat
The stronger,
And, conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
No longer.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 1.

LOOK WITHIN.

INSTEAD of keeping our eye ever on others, looking for faults and mistakes in them, we are to look to our own example, lest something we do may hurt their lives, or cause them to do wrong. We easily get into the habit of overlooking our own faults, while our life is full of inconsistencies which do irreparable harm to the cause of Christ, and to the lives of His people. We dash at our neighbour's eye to pull out some little mote we imagine we see in it, while at the same time we have a great beam in our own eye which sadly disfigures us.

The first duty of every Christian is to make sure that he lays no stumbling-blocks in others' way. A prominent man said: "I am fond of wine, and I believe I could drink moderately without danger to myself, but I never touch any kind of wine. I might set the example for some who could not drink moderately without becoming drunkards. My liberty would thus become a stumbling-block to others."

Feb. 2.

GOD'S DAY.

DURING the week we have our cares and business, and our hands are full of work that must be done. If there is no interruption in this secular life, we are apt to be made worldly minded, losing all interest in spiritual things. It is a proper enough thing for a ship to be in the sea, but when the sea gets into the ship there is an end of sailing. Christ wants us to be in the world, but He does not want the world to get into us. On the Lord's day, therefore, we should run our barque just as completely as possibly out of the world's troubled waters into the peaceful bay of spiritual rest and enjoyment. One who faithfully uses the Lord's day will be safe amid the world's unspiritual influence. A well-spent Sabbath will keep up the tone of the life amid the most intense pressure of week-day duty. No Christian who really desires to be true and faithful dare lose the Sabbaths out of his week, or fail to use them right.

Feb. 3.

MYSELF THE TEMPTER.

DO not think that God is to blame for your temptations. Some people get tangled up in their theology, and have the impression

that God tempts them, or that He might keep them from falling when they are tempted. But the evil is in ourselves, never in God. He sets us to live in a world where sin is, and where we cannot miss being tempted. But temptation is not sin: Christ was tempted. The sin comes in when we yield to temptation. Paul shook off the viper that fastened upon his hand, and was not harmed in the least by its fangs. So may we do with temptation, through Christ's help.

"But why does not God keep us from falling when we are tempted? Surely He is strong enough," says someone. We are moral beings, with power of choice. God never compels us to be good. If He did we would be only machines. He helps us to meet and overcome temptation if we look to Him for help. Therefore, if we fall the fault is our own, never God's.

Feb. 4.

RESURRECTION JOY.

CHRIST has indeed been raised from the dead. No fact in all the world's history was ever more indisputably certain. At once a flood of light streams in through this window. An Eastern story tells of one walking on the shore of the sea, and seeing in the sand a gleaming gold spangle. Picking it up, he

found that it was attached to a silver thread. He wound the silver thread about his neck, his arms and his body, until he was covered from head to foot with the shining web of silver flashing all over with gold spangles. So it is when we take into our hand this one blessed truth of the resurrection of Christ. A thousand other blessings and hopes are attached to it. As we accept these our whole being is wrapped in the splendour of resurrection joy and glory.

Feb. 5.

HEAVEN'S OPEN DOOR.

NO matter how many come to Christ, there is yet room for more. However many are received into heaven, heaven will never be so full that anyone coming shall be shut out. Sometimes we read that at some great meeting the doors were closed and hundreds were turned away. But this never has been said, never will be said, of the door of God's love, or of the door of heaven.

This door is always open. In the representation of heaven as a city, in the Revelation, there are twelve gates—three on each of the four sides. No matter from which we approach we shall always find a door of entrance. Come when we may, by day or by night, we shall not find the door shut in our face.

Feb. 6.

PREPARATION FOR SERVICE.

WE need the patience of Christ to prepare us for His service. The moment we enter the company of His disciples, He gives us work to do for Him. We are sent to find other souls, to bind up broken hearts, to comfort sorrow, to help lost ones home through the gloom. All this work is delicate and important, and we need for it the patience as well as the gentleness of Christ. It must be done lovingly, in faith, unhurriedly, under the Spirit's guidance.

Feb. 7.

SANCTIFIED SORROWS.

IF we do not submit ourselves to God in our grief, if we resist and rebel, if we chafe and repine and go on grieving inconsolably, our sorrow hurts our lives. It mars the beauty. It hushes the song. It dims the eye. It robs the heart of its love. If, however, we reverently accept our sorrow as a messenger from God, sent on a mission of love, bearing gifts and blessings from heaven for us, then we shall get good and not evil from our pain and loss. We have only to keep our hearts sweet, trustful, songful, without bitterness, without fear, and then leave with God all the outcome of the suffering.

Feb. 8.

WE MUST HELP OURSELVES.

OUR own faults ought to interest us more than our neighbour's, because they are our own, and being our own we are responsible for them. We do not have to answer for any other one's sins, but for our own we must answer, and the responsibility for getting rid of them is ours. "Every man must bear his own burden." No faithful friend, no wise teacher, can cure our faults for us. If ever they are taken out of our life, it must be by our own decision, our own faith, our own firm, persistent effort. The prayer of others may avail to bring divine help, and the sympathy and encouragement of others may make us stronger in our struggle, but the real work is our own.

Feb. 9.

GOD HAS NEED OF US.

CHRIST is the vine, and we are the branches. It is upon our human lives that the fruit must grow with which Christ would feed the hunger of men. He is not here any more in the flesh, but we are here in His place. We represent Him, and the blessings which He would give to the world must be given through us. There is no other way in which they can be given. Angels would gladly

come to earth to do our work, but they could not do it. We are the body of Christ, our hands are His hands, our feet are His feet, our lips are His lips. During His incarnation He lived in one human body; now His body is the whole company of believers.

Feb. 10.

THE LESSONS OF SORROW.

WE should never allow ourselves to face toward life's glooms; we should never sit down in the shadows of any sorrow and let the night darken over us into the gloom of despair; we should turn our face away toward the light, and quicken every energy for braver duty, and truer, holier service. Grief should always make us better, and give us new skill and power; it should make our heart softer, our spirit kindlier, our touch more gentle; it should teach us its holy lessons, and we should learn them, and then go on, with sorrow's sacred ordination upon us, to new love and better service.

Feb. 11.

REJOICE ALWAYS.

HAPPINESS is a duty, quite as much a duty as truthfulness, honesty, or good temper. There are many Scripture words which exhort us to rejoice. Jesus was a rejoicing man.

Although a "man of sorrows," the deep undertone of His life, never once failing, was gladness. Joy is set down as one of the fruits of the Spirit, a fruit which should be found on every branch of the great Vine. St. Paul exhorted his friends to rejoice in the Lord. There are almost countless incitements to gladness. We are to live a songful life. There are in the Scriptures many more calls to praise than to prayer.

Feb. 12.

OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR.

WE do grievous wrong to others by withholding from them what we owe to them. There is a sin of not doing. We shall be judged, not alone by what we do, but also by what we leave undone. We need to give more heed to the active side of our life. We cannot cut ourselves off from our brothers. It is not enough to think of getting on in the world: we dare not seek to get on and pay no heed to those who are journeying with us.

Feb. 13.

LOVE NEVER FAILETH.

IT is wonderful how love transfigures a life. It changes all the world to our eyes. People are not seen now with critical spirit,

watching for faults; nor with sensitive spirit, shrinking from every unkindly touch, and resenting every rude, disagreeable, or even unjust thing in their treatment of us; nor, with exacting spirit, demanding attention, claiming rights, and measuring and counting favours due. Love sees in every other person one to be served, to be ministered unto, to be helped, to be patiently borne with, to be treated kindly in spite of his faults. Love transforms all conditions of life, all circumstances. Its business is to be sweet, no matter the weather or the worry or the suffering, and it thus takes the bitterness out of whatever would otherwise be bitter. Thus it makes the whole life bright and radiant.

Feb. 14.

OUR ONLY HOPE.

ONLY Christ can make any life, young or old, truly beautiful or truly happy. Only He can cure the heart's restless fever and give quietness and calmness. Only He can purify that sinful fountain within us, our corrupt nature, and make us holy. To have a peaceful and blessed ending to life, we must live it with Christ. Such a life grows brighter even to its close. Its last days are the sunniest and the sweetest. The more earth's joys fail, the nearer and the more satisfying do the comforts become.

Feb. 15

AS WE LIVE, WE ARE.

THIS world is a place to gather in for heaven. We shall be there what we make ourselves here. We shall find there the treasures we have gathered here. Our crown there will be woven of the blessedness of faithful obedience and service in this world. Says Ruskin: "What fairy palaces we may build of beautiful things—proof against all adversity—bright fancies, satisfied memories, noble histories, faithful sayings; treasure-houses of precious and restful thoughts, which care cannot disturb, nor pain make gloomy, nor poverty take away from us—houses built without hands, for our souls to live in."

Feb. 16.

FAITHFUL IN LITTLE.

IT is the faithfulness of the one-talented million rather than of the richly-endowed one or two that is needed to-day to hasten the coming of Christ's kingdom. There is not a gift so small that it is not wanted to make the work of the Church complete. There is not one so small but that its hiding away leaves some life unblest. There is not one so insignificant that it may not start a wave of influence which shall roll on over the sea of human life until it breaks on the shores of Eternity.

Feb. 17.

GOD KNOWS BEST.

THERE is a little fable, which says that a primrose, growing by itself in a shady corner of the garden, became discontented as it saw the other flowers in their gay beds in the sunshine, and begged to be removed to a more conspicuous place. Its prayer was granted. The gardener transplanted it to a more showy and sunny spot. It was greatly pleased, but there came a change over it immediately. Its blossoms lost much of their beauty, and became pale and sickly. The hot sun caused them to faint and wither. So it prayed again to be taken back to its old place in the shade. The wise gardener knows best where to plant each flower, and so God, the divine Husbandman, knows where His people will best grow into what He would have them to be. Some require the fierce storms, some will only thrive spiritually in the shadow of worldly adversity, and some come to ripeness more sweetly under the soft and gentle influences of prosperity whose beauty rough experiences would mar. He knows what is best for each one.

Feb. 18

LONELY LIVES.

THERE are special experiences of loneliness in every life for which Christ is needed. Youth is one of these times. Youth seems happy and light-hearted. Companionships swarm all around it. But ofttimes a young person feels lonely even amid such scenes and friendships. All life is new to him. As his soul awakes a thousand questions arise demanding answer. He is in a world with a thousand paths, and he must choose in which he will walk. Everything is mysterious. There are perils lurking on all sides. Choices must be made. Lessons must be learned. All is new, and at every step the voice is heard, "You have not passed this way heretofore." This loneliness of inexperience, when a young soul is taking its earliest steps in life, is one of the most trying and painful feelings of all the years. If Christ be not then the Companion, lonely and perilous indeed is the way. But if He walks beside the young soul in its inexperience, all is well.

Feb. 19.

THE DUTY OF GIVING.

THE world is very full of sorrow and trial, and we cannot live among our fellow-men and be true without sharing their loads.

Selfishness must die, or our own heart's life must be frozen within us. We begin to felicitate ourselves on some special prosperity, and next moment some human need knocks at our door, and we must share our good things with a suffering brother. We may build up our fine theories of taking care of ourselves, of living for the future, of laying up in the summer of prosperity for the winter of adversity, of providing for old age or for our children; but ofttimes all these frugal and economic plans have to yield to the exigencies of human need. The love that seeketh not its own plays havoc with life's hard logic. We cannot say that anything is our own when our brother is suffering for what we can give.

Feb. 20.

THE PLACE OF HONOUR.

THE way a commander honours the best regiment on the field of battle is not by assigning it to some easy post, to some duty away from danger. He honours it by giving it the most perilous post, the duty requiring the most splendid courage. So it is in all life—the place of honour is always the hardest place, where the most delicate and difficult duty must be done, where the heaviest burden of responsibility must be borne. It is never a real honour

to be given an easy place. Instead of demanding a place of honour as a favour of friendship, which sets no seal of real greatness upon our brow, we should win our place of honour by worthy deeds and services.

Feb. 21.

CREEDS OR CHRIST?

WHAT is Christ to you personally? Is He only in your Creed? Is He only a person about whom you believe a great many blessed and glorious things? Is He in your thoughts only as the mighty Saviour of all who believe on Him? Is He anything to you personally? Is He your Saviour, your Friend, your Helper? These are the questions that tell just where we stand with regard to Christ and eternal life. Opinions about Christ, though ever so true and orthodox, are not enough; only living faith in Him saves.

Feb. 22.

PERSONAL HELP.

THERE are some who want to help others, if at all, at a convenient distance. They work through committees or agents. It is a great deal better to come close to those to whom we would do good. There is a

wondrous power in a human touch. A gift to the poor may do good in whatever way it comes; but if you bestow it yourself, and manifest personal interest and sympathy, its value will be largely increased. You put something of yourself into your gift. The Gospel may save the fallen, though coming through the cold air from a lofty pulpit; but it will be far more likely to save if the sinner feels the touch of a hand of love, and catches the message warm from quivering lips.

Feb. 23.

NOTHING IS LOST.

WE may believe that as in nature so in human life, not the smallest particle is ever wasted. Many things we try to do seem to fail. At least, they do not realise our desire and intention. We grieve as if the efforts had accomplished nothing. But some day we shall see that no true purpose ever has failed, that though our efforts may not all have realised what we hoped from them, yet in the unseen realm, where the true results of life are all gathered and treasured, we shall find all our hopes and dreams, all our good intentions that could not be fulfilled here, all our plans and purposes that we had not the strength to carry out in this world.

Feb. 24.

CHRIST AS FRIEND.

IN the New Testament the Christian's relation to Christ is represented as a personal acquaintance with Him, which ripens into a close and tender friendship. This was our Lord's own ideal of discipleship. He invited men to come to Him, to break other ties, and attach themselves personally to Him; to leave all and go with Him. He claimed the full allegiance of men's hearts and lives: He must be first in their affections, and first in their obedience and service. He offered Himself to men, not merely as a helper from without, not merely as one who would save them by taking their sins and dying for them, but as one who desired to form with them a close, intimate, and indissoluble friendship.

Feb. 25.

THE STRENGTH OF SYMPATHY.

THERE is something in the simple touch of a friendly hand, or the look of a kindly eye, or the emotion that plays on an earnest face, that sends a quickening thrill through our souls. When one is in deep sorrow, how is he strengthened to bear it by feeling the pressure of a warm clasp, which tells him, better than any words could do, of sincere sympathy! It can-

not bring back his dead; it cannot restore the shattered idol; it cannot calm the storm that is raging about him; it cannot remove a straw of the burden, nor eliminate one line of the chapter of grief: but there is another human heart close by that feels for him; there is a loving presence creeping up in the darkness close beside him; there is companionship: he is not alone, and this blessed consciousness makes him strong.

Feb. 20.

GROWTH AND DAILY LIFE.

IS your character compacting toward patience, gentleness, truth, love?—or toward impatience, harshness, falsehood, and selfishness? We grow always in the direction of our daily living. Made to soar above the earth as our souls are, to fly toward God and heaven, if we only grovel in the dust, and do not use our wings, we lose power to soar, and our whole life grows toward earthliness. But if we train ourselves to look upward, to walk erect, to gather our soul's food from the branches of the tree of life, our whole being will grow toward spirituality and heavenliness.

Feb. 27.

CHRIST ASKS OUR LIVES.

"LET this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." He gave His life to save the world; He calls us to give our lives to save the world. It is not enough to tell in flaming words of the love of Christ to men; we must be in flaming lives the love of Christ to men. It is not enough to sit in our places of worship and sing praises to God for our own salvation; we must hasten out to seek and to save the lost.

Feb. 28.

SORROW'S GIFTS.

WE should always remember that there are blessings which can come to us only in sorrow, lessons which can be learned only in pain and suffering. Even of Jesus it is said that He was made perfect through suffering. There were qualities in Him which could not reach their best save in the school of pain. There are in all of us possibilities of spiritual loveliness, and strength, and love, and helpfulness which never can come to their highest development save in suffering. If we cannot endure suffering we cannot grow to our best.

Feb. 29.

SMALL SERVICES.

THERE are many people living in the midst of unattractive circumstances, amid hardship, toil, and care, whose daily life breathes out gentle music which blesses others about them. They do no great services, but they crowd the hours with little ministries which fall like silver bell-notes on weary hearts. They are faithful in all their commonplace duties. They are patient under all manner of irritating experiences. They keep happy and contented even in times of suffering and need, cheerful and trusting even in want. They live in quiet harmony with the will of God, making no jarring discords by insubmission or wilfulness. Thus in their lowly sphere they make music which is sweet to the ear both of God and man.

MARCH

Up, my drowsing eyes!
Up, my sinking heart!
Up, to Jesus Christ arise!
Claim your part
In all raptures of the skies!

Yet a little while,
Yet a little way,
Saints shall reap and rest and smile
All the day:
Up! let's trudge another mile!

Christina G. Rossetti.

MARCH

March 1.

DO YOU GIVE THANKS?

HONOURING God in the presence of all the company, and not omitting a religious duty even in a wild storm. This is one of the finest scenes in Paul's life. The ship is swinging by its anchors in the tossing waves. The morning is just dimly dawning. The rain is pouring down. The 276 weary and despairing men are gathered on the deck. In their midst Paul rises up and speaks to them cheering and assuring words. Then taking bread, and uncovering his head in the storm, he looks up to heaven and gives thanks to God for the food he holds in his hand, and then begins to eat.

If there ever was an occasion when it would seem that a Christian might omit "asking a blessing" on his food, was it not here? But Paul did not omit it; and who can tell the influence of that act? Yet there are professed Christian families who sit down to their meals in the quiet of home, and never give God thanks!

March 2.

THOUGHTLESS MISCHIEF.

THERE is one way in which very many evil stories about people are started. Somebody "supposes" something about another, and tells his suspicion as a fact, and it goes forth on its ruinous errand. A good man does an entirely harmless and proper thing, but someone imagines something wrong at the back of it, and tells the creation of his imagination as a fact, and a character is blackened. Many a scandal grows out of what some evil-disposed person "supposes."

Our lesson still is, the duty of sacredly cherishing the honour and purity of the good names of others. We have no right to "suppose" that another has done a wrong thing, and then start our supposition as a fact. A large part of the miserable gossip which is retailed by idle people in drawing-rooms and loitering places is started just in this way. The result is, that good names are stained, and endless mischief is wrought. That such Satanic work should ever be done by professing Christians is a burning dishonour.

March 3.

CONQUERING THROUGH PATIENCE.

PATIENCE is the spirit of endurance, without complaint or bitterness, of whatever things in our life are hard to endure. It is a lesson that is hard to learn, but which is well worth learning at whatever cost. So important is it, that our Lord Himself said of it: "In your patience ye shall win your souls." That is, life is a battle in which we fight for our soul. The battle can be won only by patience. To fail in this grace is to lose all. This suggests how necessary it is that we learn the lesson, however hard it may be. Not to learn it is to lose the battle of life, and that is the losing of the soul.

March 4.

THE PURPOSE OF TRIAL.

ONE writes wisely: "It would be a poor result of all our anguish and our wrestling if we were nothing but our old selves at the end of it; if we could return to the same blind loves, the same self-confident blame, the same light thoughts of human suffering, the same frivolous gossip over blighted human lives, the same feeble sense of the unknown toward which we have sent forth irrepressible yearnings in our

loneliness. Let us rather be thankful that our sorrow lives in us as an indestructible force, only changing its form as forces do, and passing from pain into sympathy." The wholesome use of grief is the putting of its pain into new energy of loving and living.

March 5.

CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY.

EVERYTHING Christian is to be abundant. Our forgiveness is to be on the same scale. Jesus did not even mean to limit the number to literally seventy times seven. By using this large number He meant to teach us that there was to be absolutely no limit to our forgiveness. We are not to keep account of the number of times we have to forgive another. God does not keep account of His forgiveness of us, and we are to forgive as He forgives. The time never really comes when we may say: "I cannot forgive you again; I have exhausted the requirements of Christian love."

March 6.

THE VOICE IN THE CLOUD.

MANY of the greatest revealings of comfort are spoken to God's children out of the clouds of sorrow or trouble. Many a Christian

learns more about God in a brief season of trial than he has ever learned before in years of earthly prosperity. Out of the cloud came the Father's voice, saying, "This is My Son, My chosen: hear ye Him." This was the Father's witness to the Messiahship of Jesus. We should learn to listen to Christ, and to Him alone.

March 7.

KNOWING AND DOING.

"THOU hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." No doubt Jesus put the emphasis upon the words "answered" and "do." Many people can answer well. They can quote texts about honesty and truthfulness, and yet they are neither honest nor truthful. They talk freely about the love of Christ, which is meek, patient, unselfish, and compassionate, but they do not think of getting any of these qualities into their own life. If doing were as easy as knowing, how good we all should be!

March 8.

CULTIVATE GLADNESS.

IT has been said that the habit of seeing always the bright side in life is worth a large income to a man. No doubt this is true.

Then it makes life a great deal brighter. None of us are naturally drawn to a gloomy person, who finds everywhere something to complain about; but we are all attracted to one who sees some beauty in everything and delights in that, while he does not fret over what is not bright. Joy is a transfiguring quality. Its secret is a glad heart. for he who has the bird in his heart will see a bird on every bush.

March 9.

UNAVAILING REGRETS.

WITH many a lonely heart regret does indeed walk night and day because of the memory of unkind words spoken which can never be unspoken, since the ears that heard them are deaf to every sound of earth. Friends have separated with sharp words or in momentary estrangement through some trivial difference, and have never met again. Death has come suddenly to one of them, or life has set their feet in paths divergent from that moment. Many a bitter and unavailing tear—bitter because unavailing—is shed over the grave of a departed one, by one who would give worlds for a single moment in which to beg forgiveness or seek to make reparation

March 10.

MAKING THE BEST OF THINGS.

WHY should I hide my one talent in the earth because it is not ten? Why should I make my life a failure in the place allotted to me, while I sit down and dream over unattainable things? Why should I miss my one golden opportunity, however small, while I envy some other one what seems his greater opportunity? Countless people make themselves wretched by vainly trying to grasp far-away joys, while they leave untouched and despised the numberless little joys and bright bits of happiness which lie close to their hand. As one has written: "Stretching out his hand to catch the stars, man forgets the flowers at his feet, so beautiful, so fragrant, so multitudinous and so various." The secret of happiness lies in extracting pleasure from the things we have, while we enter no mad, vain chase after impossible fancies.

March 11.

SACREDNESS OF LIFE.

THOSE who study carefully our Lord's life will be struck with His wonderful reverence for human life. He looked upon no one with disdain or contempt. The meanest fragment of humanity that crept into His

presence, trampled, torn, stained, defiled, was yet sacred in His eyes. He never despised any human being. And further, He stood before men, not as a king demanding attention, reverence, service, but as one who wished to serve, to help, to lift up. He said He had not come to be ministered unto, but to minister. He never thought of what was due from men to Him, but always of what He could do for them, how He could serve them. How could it be otherwise, since He came to earth solely to save men, and since His heart was so full of love for them?

March 12.

HARDSHIP TESTS CHARACTER.

THE tree that grows where tempests toss its boughs and bend its trunk, often almost to breaking, is more firmly rooted than the tree which grows in the sequestered valley where no storm ever brings stress or strain. The same is true in life. The grandest character is grown in hardship. Effeminacy springs out of luxury. The best men the world ever reared have been brought up in the school of adversity and hardship. Besides, it is no heroism to live patiently where there is no provocation, bravely where there is no danger, calmly where there is nothing to perturb. Not the hermit's cave, but the heart of busy life, tests as well as makes character. If

we can live patiently, lovingly, and cheerfully amid all our frets and irritations day after day, year after year, that is grander heroism than the farthest famed military exploits, for he that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city.

March 13.

OUR NEED OF CHRIST.

ONE reason, no doubt, why our lives are so full of experiences of need is that we may learn to walk with Christ. If earth's human companionships satisfied us, and if we never lost them, we might not care for Christ's. If earth's homes were perfect, and if they never crumbled, we might not grow homesick for heaven.

March 14

THE TENDERNESS OF LOVE.

OUR neighbours are about us all the time, needing our love. Indeed, they touch our lives so continually that we must guard our every look, word, and act, lest we hurt some sensitive spirit. Some people seem to forget that other people have feelings. They are constantly saying words and doing things which give pain. True love is thoughtful. We ought to train our hearts to the most delicate sense of

kindness, that we may never even in jest give pain to any other human being. Our neighbours have hearts, and we owe to every one of them—the beggar we meet on the street, the poor wretch we find crawling in the mire of sin's debasement, the enemy who flings his insults in our face,—to everyone we owe the love that is thoughtful, gentle, and gives no hurt.

March 15.

STRENGTH IN QUIET.

IT is in the calm quiet life that the truest strength is found. The power that is blessing the world these days comes from the purity and sweetness of gentle mother-love, from the quiet influence of example in faithful fathers, from the patience and unselfishness of devoted sisters, from the tender beauty of innocent child-life in homes, above all, from the silent cross and the Divine Spirit's breathings of gentle stillness. The noiseless agencies are doing the most to bless the world. There is strength in quietness.

March 16.

SELF-RENUNCIATION.

TRUE self-denial is the renouncing of self and the yielding of the whole life to the will of Christ. It is self coming down from

the life's throne, laying crown and sceptre at the Master's feet, and thenceforth submitting the whole life to His sway. It is living all the while, not to please ourselves, not to advance our own personal interests, but to please our Lord and do His work. It is denying to ourselves anything that is sinful in His sight. It is the glad making of any sacrifice that loyalty to Him requires. It is the giving up of any pleasure or comfort for the good of others which the living out of His spirit may demand. The essential thing is that self gives way altogether to Christ as the motive of life.

March 17.

THE DIVINE LOVE.

WHEREVER we see Christ He is imparting blessing as the sun imparts light and warmth. While He was here on the earth He was always reaching out His hand to give a benediction to some life that sorely needed it. Now it was on the children's heads, now on the leper, now on the blind eyes, now on the sick, now on the dead, that He laid those gracious hands, and always He left some rich gift of blessing. Then we remember one day when those gentle hands were drawn out by cruel enemies, and with iron nails fastened back on the Cross; yet even then it was in blessing that

they were extended, for it was for our sins they were transfixed thus on wood. As we see them thus stretched out as wide as they could reach, the attitude suggests the wideness of the divine mercy. Thus the arms of God are open to the utmost to receive all who will come to seek refuge. There is room for the worst sinners.

March 18.

HUMILITY IN GIVING.

IF we are wise we will avoid all display in efforts to please others. We will simply seek to be our natural selves, with sincere love, with patience, thoughtfulness, and kindliness in our spirits. We will not talk about it—talking about it spoils everything. The best good is done always when we wist not that we are doing good. The greatest help is given to others when they wist not that they are being helped.

March 19.

THE BLESSING OF QUIET.

EVERY true Christian life needs its daily silent times, when all shall be still, when the busy activity of other hours shall cease, and when the heart, in holy hush, shall commune with God. One of the greatest needs in

Christian life in these days is more devotion. Ours is not an age of prayer so much as an age of work. The tendency is to action rather than to worship; to busy toil rather than to quiet sitting at the Saviour's feet to commune with Him. The keynote of our present Christian life is consecration, which is understood to mean devotion to active service. On every hand we are incited to work. Our zeal is stirred by every inspiring incentive. The calls to duty come to us from a thousand earnest voices.

March 20.

THE SYMPATHY OF EXPERIENCE.

SYMPATHY is more than an echo; its background is individual experience. Strength is not enough for this ministry of sympathy, even the purest, noblest, most majestic strength: it must have passed through the fires of suffering, or of struggle, to get the fineness and delicacy required for this sacred work. Moral uprightness and purity are not enough: unchastened, even these divine qualities are too cold to render the service that sad and weary hearts need in their loneliness and weakness.

March 21.

SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY.

THE promise given to one of the tribes was, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Strength was not promised in advance,—enough for all life, or even for a year, or for a month,—but the promise was, that for each day, when it came with its own needs, duties, battles, and griefs, enough strength would be given. As the burden increased, more strength would be imparted. As the night grew darker, the lamps would shine out more brightly. The important thought here is, that strength is not emptied into our hearts in bulk—a supply for years to come—but is kept in reserve, and given day by day, just as the day's needs require.

March 22.

GIVE LOVE.

WE are always to hold ourselves ready to show the kindness of love to every human being that crosses our path. We do not know how many of those whom we meet any day do need us. There may be none of the great crying needs which kindle compassion in all human breasts. We may go for years and come upon no one lying wounded by the wayside. But there are needs just as real as these, and perhaps quite as tragic. There are

hearts that are discouraged, needing cheer that they faint not. There are people who are tempted, wavering, and ready to fall. There are those who are carrying a burden of sorrow, crying out for comfort. There are those who are hungry for love.

March 23.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFLUENCE.

THE world is ever full of human lives whose eternal destiny seems to depend upon whether they meet cloud or sunshine, encouragement or discouragement, hope or despair, in the faces that look into theirs. Guides sometimes warn tourists among the Swiss mountains not to speak as they pass certain points. Even the reverberation of a whisper in the air may start a poised avalanche from its place on the crags. There are times in the story of many human lives when they are so delicately poised that it depends on how the first person they meet greets them whether they sink into the darkness of despair or lift up their head to find hope. We never know when passing mood of ours may decide a soul's destiny. We dare not then, even for a moment, or in one case, be a discourager of another soul.

March 24.

TOO LATE!

THERE are those who wait till death has come before they begin to speak their words of appreciation and commendation. There are many who say their first truly generous words of others beside their coffins. They bring their flowers then, although they never gave a flower when their friends were living. Many a person goes down in defeat, under life's burdens, unhelped, uncheered, and then, when the eyes are closed and the hands folded, there comes, too late, love enough to have turned the tide of battle and given victory, had it come a little earlier. Life is hard for many people, and we have no right to withhold any look or word or touch or act of love which will lighten the load or cheer the heart of any fellow-struggler. The best use we can make of our life is to live so that we shall be a benediction to everyone we meet.

March 25.

THE CURSE OF TEMPER.

SOMEONE says: "Losing the temper takes all the sweet, pure feeling out of life. You may get up in the morning with a clean heart, full of song, and start out as happy as a bird; but the moment you are crossed and give way to your temper, the clean feeling vanishes,

and a load as heavy as lead is rolled upon your heart; you go through the rest of the day feeling like a culprit. Anyone who has experienced this feeling knows, too, that it cannot be shaken off, but must be prayed off."

March 26.

COMMON ACTS OF COMMON DAYS.

WE have no adequate conception of the far-reaching influence of our acts and words. We do not live for ourselves alone any single day. Our smallest deeds touch other lives, and set in motion currents of moral impression which shall roll on for ever. We do not know what it may mean to Christ's cause on the earth, and to other human souls, for us to be true and faithful any little hour. We do not know what eyes are upon us in the common life of the common days—watching us, not critically, not hoping to find some flaw in us, but with most eager desire to learn if indeed there be grace in Christ to help a soul to be faithful.

March 27.

THE GREATEST THING.

JUST in the measure that we love others are we ready to help them in any true way. Nothing but love will do men good. Power

has its ways of helping. Law may protect. Money will buy bread and build homes. But for the helpfulness which means the most in human lives, nothing but love prepares us. Even the most lavish and the most opportune gifts, if love be not in them, lack that which chiefly gives them their value. It is not the man whose service of others costs the most in money value who is the greatest benefactor, but the man who gives the most of human compassion, the most of himself, with his gifts.

March 28.

BLESSINGS IN STORE.

WE should remember that the blessings which have gone away are not all that God has for us. This summer's flowers will fade by and by, when winter's cold breath smites them—we shall not be able to find one of them in the fields or gardens during the long cold dreary months to come—yet we shall know all the while that God has other flowers preparing just as fragrant and as lovely as those which have perished. Spring will come again, and under its warm breath the earth will be covered once more with floral beauty as rich as that which faded in the autumn. So the joys that have gone from our home and our heart are not the only joys; God has others in store just

as rich as those we have lost, and in due time He will give us these to fill our emptied hands.

March 29.

ONE WITH GOD.

THE Christian does not merely receive blessings from Christ, does not merely enjoy His friendship, have His help, and live under His protection. This would be a high privilege, even if it were all. To have the Son of God for Friend, Helper, Keeper, and Guide brings into a sinful, frail, imperilled human life unspeakable good. But the believer is a branch of Christ, one with Him. Christ's life is his life. Christ's fulness flows into his heart. Christ's joy and peace and strength are his. Apart from Christ he can do nothing, but in Christ he can do all things.

March 30.

THE DISCIPLINE OF FAILURE.

LOVE, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control,—these are the qualities in which we must grow if we would be really advancing in life as God sees us. And it is possible for a man to be making progress in these qualities of his heart-life even in the midst of earthly failure.

Indeed, it is true that men ofttimes learn their best lessons in the school of defeat. Nature in all of us needs to be disciplined before it reaches its best and ripest, and discipline is not achieved usually without many lessons in humility.

March 31.

GOD KNOWS.

TO us the path of each day is always new—we have not passed this way heretofore, and we cannot tell what any hour may bring to us. But He knows all the way, for He went over every inch of it. There is no human experience which Christ does not understand. No suffering can be ours which He did not feel. No wrong can hurt us, but He was hurt far more sorely. Is the burden heavy? His burden was infinitely heavier, for He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses, and bowed beneath the load of our sins. There is no phase of struggle, of suffering, of pain, of temptation, or of joy with which He is unfamiliar. And knowing thus the way, from having sought it out for Himself, He is able to guide us in it.

APRIL

Here, and here alone,
Is given thee to suffer for God's sake.
In the other worlds we shall more perfectly
Serve Him and love Him, praise Him, work for Him,
Grow near and nearer Him with all delight;
But then we shall not any more be called
To suffer, which is our appointment here.
Canst thou not suffer, then, one hour or two?
If He should call thee from thy cross to-day,
Saying, It is finished!—that hard cross of thine
From which thou prayest for deliverance,
Thinkest thou not some passion of regret
Would overcome thee? Thou wouldst say, So soon?
Let me go back and suffer yet awhile
More patiently:—I have not yet praised God!

M. E. H. King.

APRIL

April 1.

TO GIVE IS TO KEEP.

THERE is a legend of a golden organ in some ancient monastery, which, to save it from robbers, the monks cast into a deep river. In the waters it still continued to send forth sweet music which the floods could not hush. So it is in a true Christian life. The floods do not drown the songs of joy. A visitor made an appeal to a generous man on one occasion for missions, and he made out a cheque for five pounds. Before the ink was dry a telegram was handed to him. He said to the visitor: "I have received bad news. I have lost a great deal of money. Give me back the cheque." The visitor expected the cheque now to be cancelled. But the gentleman, on receiving it, altered the five pounds to fifty pounds, saying: "God has just taught me that I may not much longer possess my property, and that I must use it well while I have it." The only money we keep is that which we give to God.

April 2.

JOYOUS IN SUFFERING.

WE may learn to bear troubles submissively, but to rejoice in them is something which to many seems impossible. But the grace of Christ is equal even to this strange task, enabling us to rejoice in our tribulations. Thousands of Christians have done it. St. Paul himself did it. We remember his "songs in the night" at Philippi.

This is what Christian faith may always do. The secret of it is perfect trust in the will and love of God. None can rejoice in pain or loss who has not a settled confidence in the rightness of God's ways. Someone tells how a flute is made. Here is a piece of wood. It is solid and hard, and makes no sound. Then a workman takes it and cuts holes in it and makes a rift through it. It is by thus cutting as if destroying it that it is made into a flute which gives forth sweet music. God seems ofttimes to be destroying His children by tribulations, but He is really preparing them to give forth sweet music.

April 3.

RESTORING THE LOST.

WHEN we see one slipping away from the right path, from truth and holiness, from the Church and sacred things, through the

influence of some tempter, getting entangled in bad company and dropping out of the fellowship of the good, we should do shepherd work and try to win back the imperilled one. We are staying here to represent Christ, to do His work. A Christian who is not interested in seeking and restoring lost ones is not the kind of Christian the Good Shepherd wants.

April 4.

GOD'S INDIVIDUAL CARE.

IT is easy enough for us to understand how the Syrian shepherd knows each of his sheep by name. His flock is small, and he can readily know the name of each. But when we think of the millions who are in Christ's flock, it seems strange to us that He knows and calls each one by name. Yet the truth is made very clear in the Scriptures. Every mother knows her own children by name, and it is as easy for the Good Shepherd to know each of His millions by name as for any human mother to know each of her little group of children. There is comfort in this teaching. We are not lost in the crowd. Each one of us is individualised in God's love and thought and care.

April 5.

HIDDEN BLESSINGS.

MANY of the best blessings of life may be traced to some affliction. For example, Dr. Moon, inventor of raised reading for the blind, at the very time of his highest attainments and largest usefulness, became totally blind. It seemed a terrible misfortune, and there appeared no alleviation. At first he was rebellious, refusing to submit to God. At length, however, he began to interest himself in the question of how he might be helpful to other people. The result was the invention of the alphabet for the blind which is now used in many countries, by which many millions of blind people in all parts of the world are enabled to read. Thus we can say of Dr. Moon's blindness, that it came upon him that the works of God might be made manifest in him.

April 6.

THE PEACE OF GOD.

CHRISTIAN peace is the calm of the heart which is not dependent on any circumstances, and which no circumstances, however full of danger or alarm, can break. Its secret is, perfect trust in God. The lesson of peace is one that has to be learned in the school of life. It is not gotten by the changing of life's con-

ditions, so as to hide one away beyond the reach of storm. Nor is it gained through the deadening of the feelings and sensibilities, so that life's pains and trials will no longer hurt the heart. This would be paying too great a price even for peace. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It comes through the encircling of the life with God's own peace. "The peace of God shall guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus."

April 7.

TRUE PERSPECTIVE.

LIFE'S actions do not appear to us in the same colours when viewed in the noontide glare and in the evening's twilight. Little things in our treatment of others, which at the time, under the crosslights of emulation and rivalry or in the excitement of business and social life, do not seem wrong, when seen from the shadows of final separation or great grief, fill us with shame and regret. This after-view is by far the truest. After-thoughts are the wiser thoughts. We get the most faithful representation of life in retrospect. The things we regret in such an hour are things we ought not to have done. The things we wish then we had done are things we ought to have done. There could be no better test of life's actions than the question, "How will this appear when I look

back upon it from the end? Will it give me pleasure or pain?"

April 8.

MEETING TROUBLE HALF WAY.

ONE way to train ourselves to cheerful views of life is resolutely to refuse to be frightened at shadows, or even to see trouble where there is none. Half or more of the things that most worry us have no existence save in a disordered fancy. Many things that in the dim distance look like shapes of peril, when we draw near to them, melt into harmless shadows, or even change into forms of friendliness. Much of the gloomy tinge that many people see on everything is caused by the colour of the glasses through which they look. We sit behind our blue-glass windows, and then wonder what makes everything blue. The greater part of our discontent is caused by some imaginary trouble which never really comes.

April 9.

WAYSIDE MINISTRIES.

IN every life there are opportunities for wayside ministry. Indeed, the voluntary activities of any life do not by any means measure its

influence. The things we do with deliberate intention make but a small part of the sum-total of our life results. Our influence has no nights and keeps no Sabbaths. It is as continuous as life itself. We are leaving impressions all the while on other lives.

April 10.

HEART PEACE.

THERE is no life into which do not come many things calculated to cause anxiety and distraction of mind. There are great sorrows; there are perplexities as to duty; there are disappointments and losses; there are annoyances and hindrances; there are chafings and irritations in ordinary life; and there are countless petty cares and frets. All of these tend to break the heart's peace and to disturb its quiet, yet there is no lesson that is urged more continuously or more earnestly in the Scriptures than that a Christian should never worry or let care oppress his heart. He is to live without distraction and with peace unbroken even in the midst of the most trying experiences.

April 11.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

THE truth of personal responsibility is one of tremendous moment. We do not escape it by being in a crowd, one of a family, or of a

congregation. No one but ourself can live our life, do our work, meet our obligation, bear our burdens. No one but ourself can stand for us at last before God to render an account of our deeds. In the deepest, realest sense each one of us lives alone. We are responsible only for our own life and duty.

April 12.

BEARING WITH EACH OTHER.

WE should train ourselves to such regard, to such reverence for human life, that we shall never hurt the heart of one of God's creatures, even by a disdainful look. Our love ought also to be patient. Our neighbour may have his faults. But we are taught to bear with one another's infirmities. If we knew the story of men's lives, the hidden loads they are carrying ofttimes for others, the unhealed sore in their heart, we would have most gentle patience with them. Life is hard for most people, certainly hard enough without our adding to its burdens by our censoriousness, our uncharity, our jeering and contempt.

April 13.

THE PATIENCE OF CHRIST.

TO whatever phase of Christ's wonderful life we turn we see sublime patience. He was patient in accepting His Father's will,

patient toward the world's sin and sorrow, patient with men's unreasonableness, uncharity, unkindness, patient with ignorance and prejudice, patient in suffering wrong. Marvellous, indeed, is this quality in our Lord's life. Who is not ready to turn the benediction into a prayer? "Lord, direct my heart . . . into the patience of Christ."

April 14.

GOD REQUIRES SERVICE.

DEVOTION is good. It is very sweet to commune with God in the closet, in the Church, at the Sacramental Table; but we must not spend all our time in these holy exercises. While the raptures thrill our souls we must not forget that outside there are human wants crying for help and sympathy; we must tear ourselves away from our warmest devotions and most exalted experiences to go down to answer these cries. Religion is not for enjoyment only: God gives us spiritual enjoyment that we may be strong for all loving service.

April 15.

AS WE SOW WE REAP.

THE Golden Rule rests upon a deep principle in life: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

What we do to others they will do to us. That is the principle. If we want mercy, we must be merciful; if we expect sympathy and help, we must give both sympathy and help. We have only to change places with people, and then ask them how we would want them to do to us. As a rule, people do not give warmth for coldness, courtesy for rudeness, kindness for unkindness. The principle applies even to the divine treatment of us. In God's judgment we receive according to our deeds. He who obtains forgiveness is he who forgives others. He who finds mercy is he who shows mercy to others. He whom Christ will confess before His Father is he who here before men confesses Christ. So for eternity we shall reap what we have sowed, and gather what we have scattered.

April 16.

THE KEYNOTE OF TRUE LIFE.

NOWHERE in the Bible can we find either ingratitude or joylessness commanded or commended. All ungrateful feelings and dispositions are condemned. A great deal is said in disapproval of murmuring, discontent, worrying, and all forms of ingratitude. Again and again we are taught that joy is the keynote of a true life. It is not enough to rejoice when the sun shines, when all things are going well with us,

when we are in the midst of prosperity; we are to rejoice as well when clouds hide the blue sky, when our circumstances seem to be adverse, or when we are passing through sufferings.

April 17.

DEVOTION PRECEDES DUTY.

DEVOTION is not all. Peter wished to stay on the Mount of Transfiguration, to go back no more to the cold, sin-stricken world below, but no: down at the mountain's base, human suffering and sorrow were waiting for the coming of the Healer, and the Master and His disciples must leave the rapture of heavenly communion, and hasten down to carry healing and comfort. It is always so. Amid the raptures of devotion we hear the calls of duty waiting without. We should never allow our ecstasies of spiritual enjoyment to make us forgetful of the needs of others around us. Even the Mount of Transfiguration must not hold us away from ministry.

April 18.

VISION AND OBEDIENCE.

LONGING not only sees the heavenly visions, but is obedient to them, and strives to realise them. It struggles up toward the

excellence that shines before it: it seeks to attain the fine qualities which it admires. It is not satisfied with good resolves, but sets forward to make them come true. When Joan of Arc was asked what virtue she supposed dwelt in her white standard that made it so victorious, she replied, "I said to it: 'Go boldly among the English,' *and then I followed it myself.*" So when we send out the white banner of pure and noble longings, we must be sure to follow them ourselves if we would win the blessings which our hearts crave.

April 19.

TACTFUL COMFORTERS.

TRUE sympathy draws us very close to the sufferer. It also gives us that thoughtfulness, and that delicacy of feeling and touch, which makes us gentle in all our treatment of grief; for no other ministry is refinement of spirit so essential as for that of dealing with pained or wounded hearts. A wrong touch, or a harsh word, or the quick flash of an eye, may do irreparable harm, only opening afresh, with new pain and torture, the wound it was meant to heal. We need the most delicate gentleness for the office of comfort.

April 20.

GOD'S UNCHANGING LOVE.

GOD'S love changes not; nothing can separate us from it. Yet unbelief can rob us of all the blessing of that love. We can shut it out of our hearts if we will. Then everything in life will harm instead of help us. The one secret of being in the world and not of the world, of passing through life and not being hurt by life's evil, of having all things work together for good to us—the one and only secret—is to have the love of God in our hearts. No one can be lost whose heart keeps in it always this blessed love.

April 21.

CHRIST'S FORBEARANCE.

CHRIST is very gentle with those who have sinned and are trying to begin again. He has no tolerance with sin, but is infinitely patient with the sinner. He saves by forgiving. He loves unto the uttermost. His grace is inexhaustible. However often we fail, when we come back and ask to try again, He welcomes us and gives us another chance. This is our hope—if He were not thus gentle with us we should never get home.

April 22.

HERALDS OF HOPE.

IF we are true and loyal messengers of Christ, we can never be prophets of gloom, disheartenment, and despair. We must ever be heralds of hope. We must always have good news to tell. There is a gospel which we have a right to proclaim to everyone, whatever be his sorrow. In Christ there is always hope, a secret of victory, a power to transmute loss into gain, to change defeat to victory, to bring life from death. We are living worthily only when we are living victoriously ourselves at every point, when we are inspiring and helping others to live victoriously, and when our life is a song of hope and gladness, even though we sing out of tears and pain.

April 23.

GOD'S WILL DAY BY DAY.

WHO does not many a time have his day's beautiful schedule disarranged by little things that come in, without announcement, and claim his thought, his time, his strength? Sometimes we may be disposed to chafe a little at what seems to be interference with the programme we have mapped out for ourselves in the morning. But we should remember that

we are learning by practice. We promised to do God's will all the day, and these things are God's will for us. We had left no place for doing things for God, and He had to force them into our well-ordered schedule.

April 24.

WORKING WITH GOD.

IN one of his Epistles St. Paul has a remarkable passage about working for God. He tells us that God and we are co-workers, and that we can do nothing without Him. This is true even in our common affairs. In a little shop on a back street a man makes a mariner's compass. It is taken on board a great ship, and by means of its trembling needle the vessel is guided over the sea unerringly to its destination. A man made the compass. Yes; a man and God. A man did the mechanical work, put the wonderful instrument together; but it was God who put into the magnet its mysterious power. This illustrates a common law. God and man are co-workers; and without God man can do nothing, while God's perfect work needs man's best.

April 25.

SELF-FORGETFULNESS.

WE should train ourselves not to think about our own good deeds. If we have done anything beautiful, made a self-denial for another's sake, conquered a feeling of resentment, given help or shown a kindness, the temptation will be to think about it in a spirit of self-commendation. But it is better we should resolutely turn from it, not allowing our thoughts to linger for a moment on the thing we have done. If we stop to contemplate our own virtues, attainments, or achievements, we do not know what the end will be. The only safe thing is to refuse to think at all of ourselves or our work. Self-consciousness is always a mark of unwholesomeness.

April 26.

HOLINESS NOT UNATTAINABLE.

DIVINE grace assures us that it is not impossible even for the most unholy life to be transformed into holiness. The being that is saturated with sin can be made whiter than snow. The wolf can be changed into lamblike gentleness. The fiercest disposition can be trained to meekness. There is no nature, therefore, however unhappy it may be

because of its original quality or its early training, which cannot, through God's help, learn the lesson of happiness.

April 27.

THE COMFORT OF GOD.

IF we creep into God's bosom, and nestle there like a tired child in the mother's arms, and let God's love enfold and embrace us, and flow into our heart, however deep the sorrow may be, we shall be comforted, satisfied. And even if every source of human joy has been cut off, and we are left utterly bereft, we can still find in God that which will suffice. His love alone is great enough to fill our heart, and His hand alone has skill to bind up our wounds.

April 28.

OUR ERRAND IN LIFE.

WE mistake when we fancy that we are in this world to make a name for ourselves. We need not give ourselves the slightest concern upon this subject. Indeed, any thought of name or fame for ourselves always detracts from the purity of our motive and spirit as disciples of Christ. We have only

one errand here—to do God's will, to fulfil the divine thought or purpose of our life, and to glorify Christ. We have nothing whatever to do with the honouring of ourselves before men, with looking after our reputation. If we honour Christ, He will honour us. If we exalt His name in our life, He will exalt our name before the angels and His Father.

April 29.

LOSING LIFE TO SAVE IT.

YOUNG people should scorn ever to be satisfied with a life of self-indulgence. The great Teacher said that he who saveth his life shall lose it. He meant the man who withholds himself from hard toil, self-denial, and service, who will do only easy things. He said further that he who loses his life, that is, who lavishes it in duty, who shrinks from no cost, no labour, no sacrifice, in obeying love's behests, saves it. The only way to make life truly worth while is to empty it out, as Christ emptied out His most precious life for God and for the world. Only the grain of wheat which falls into the ground and dies grows up into beauty and fruitfulness. The grain which is kept warm and dry and safe comes to nothing.

April 30.

SEED SOWING.

EVERY call to a hard or costly duty is a seed. It lies in our hand—what shall we do with it? Shall we keep our little ease, our piece of money, our pleasure, our quiet hour. Or shall we let it fall into the ground? Someone puts it thus: "I was given a seed to keep as mine. When I most loved it, I was bidden to bury it in the ground; I buried it, not knowing that I was sowing." We know what comes from sowing,—the seed springs up into a plant, beautiful, fragrant; or into grain that waves in a golden harvest; or into a tree, on which grow luscious fruits.

MAY

Is it raining, little flower?
Be glad of rain!
Too much sun would wither thee
'Twill shine again.
The sky is very black, 'tis true,
But just behind it shines the blue.

Art thou weary, tender heart?
Be glad of pain;
In sorrow sweetest things will grow
As flowers in rain.
God watches, and thou wilt have sun
When clouds their perfect work have done.

MAY

May 1.

IN QUIETNESS STRENGTH.

IT is well that we learn the lesson of quietness. It is a secret of power. It will save us from outbursts of temper, and from saying the rash and hasty words which one hour afterward we should be sorry for having said, and which if spoken would make so much bitterness and trouble for us. It will enable us to be cheerful and patient amid the cares and vexations of life.

May 2.

GOD MAKING US.

THERE ought to be great comfort for us in the truth, that in all our life God is making us. It is not easy to make a man or a woman into the beauty God wants to see. Some of us are harder to make, too, than others. Sometimes the cost is terrific. It took a great deal of severe discipline and schooling to make an apostle of Peter, but the price paid was not too much when the result was such a magnificent man.

May 3.

CLOSENESS OF JOY AND SORROW.

OUR purest joys and our deepest sufferings lie very close together. To have the capacity to love and to be happy is to have also the capacity to suffer. Religion makes our hearts more gentle, more thoughtful, more sympathetic, and prepares us to be pained more, not less, by the frictions, the trials, the frets of life. The Christian suffers no less in sorrow, trial, and care because he is a Christian; he probably suffers more. It is no easier, in a human sense, for a friend of Christ to meet disappointments, adversities, bereavements, and losses, and to endure the frictions and annoyances of life, than it is for the worldly man; it may be harder.

May 4.

BRAVERY IN COMMON LIFE.

IT is a great deal easier to be brave in one stern conflict which calls for heroism, in which large interests are involved, than to be brave in the thousand little struggles of the common days, for which it seems scarcely worth while to put on the armour. It is very much less a task to be good-natured under one great provocation, in the presence of others, than it

is to keep sweet temper month after month of ordinary days, amid the frictions, strifes, and petty annoyances and cares of home-life, or of business life.

May 5.

SEEKING OUR WORK.

ST. PAUL "found" certain disciples. That means that he looked them up. They did not come to him to ask him to teach them. He was not a man who waited for people to send for him when they needed some work of grace. He went out and sought for people who needed spiritual help. He did not sit down and wait for opportunities of doing good; he made opportunities for himself. He looked up work, and then did it.

We should learn a lesson from him right here. There are people all about us who need our help in some way, but who will never come to us and ask us to help them. Christ's mission was to seek and to save. He *went about* doing good. His command to His people is, "Go *ye* into all the world." There are too many people waiting for something to do for Christ. Let them go out and seek, and they will find enough to fill their hearts and hands.

May 6.

LOST OPPORTUNITY.

OPPORTUNITY for salvation comes to all. Every lost one was at some time on the very edge of salvation. There is a story of a prodigal who turned homeward and traversed weary miles, until he had his hand on the knocker of his father's door, and then withdrew it and turned away again, plunging into deeper sin and shame. "Almost" is a hopeful condition, yet it is not a safe condition. A woman was lost in the mountain. All night she wandered, seeking the way home. At length she sank down and died, as the dawn was breaking. In the morning they found her but a few steps from the door of the hotel which she was struggling to reach, almost saved, yet lost! God wants us to be altogether Christians. "Almost" will not avail.

May 7.

WITHHOLDING HELP.

WE are continually passing by on the other side of human needs and sorrows. We see persons in trouble, but do not do anything to help them. We hear the cries of distress, and we could give assistance, but we do not—we pass by. In our Lord's description of the

last judgment it is remarkable that He makes the decision to turn not so much upon sins committed as on duties neglected. Those who go to the left hand are sent there because they have not done the duties of love which they ought to have done.

May 8.

LIVING AND LOVING.

"THOU shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbour." The word "love" is, in form at least, the perfect tense of "live." There certainly can be no true living which is not loving. "God is God," and we live really only when our life is the life of God in us. We are to love God,—no other response to His wonderful love for us is worthy. Then we are to love our neighbour; in no other way can we prove that we love God. Says George MacDonald: "When God comes to man, man looks round for his neighbour."

May 9.

SILENCE WAKES EARNESTNESS.

THE strangest incident recorded of Jesus is that to the cry of a woman in need—"He answered her not a word." The

gentle Jesus stood, seeming to be unmoved by the heart-broken cries of the woman at His feet. Why was Christ thus silent? Evidently the reason for His silence was that He might draw out the woman's faith. He was preparing her to receive in the end far richer, better things than she could have received at the beginning. Our Lord yet sometimes seems to be silent to His people when they cry unto Him. Ofttimes the silence is meant to make the suppliants more earnest, and to prepare their hearts for receiving larger blessings.

May 10.

BE KIND IN TRIFLES.

KINDNESS is love doing little things, things that seem scarcely worth doing, and yet which mean much to those for whom they are wrought. Kindness lends a hand when another is burdened. It speaks the cheerful word when a heart is discouraged. It gives a cup of cold water when one is thirsty. It is always doing good turns to somebody. It goes about performing almost unconsciously its wayside ministries, with a touch of blessing for everybody. It scatters its small nameless favours everywhere. Until we think of it specially we do not realise how large a factor in the most useful and helpful lives in this world is kindness.

Few qualities do more to make a life bright and beautiful.

May 11.

CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE BRIGHT.

GOD wants our lives to be bright. He wants them to shine like lamps in the darkness. The world needs nothing so much as light,—not light blazing in the far-off sky, but light pouring out softly, low down, close by, from human lives which have been kindled at the heart of God. The aim of the Gospel of Christ is to make human lives bright with the brightness of God's own holiness. There is a word in one of Paul's letters which puts this truth in the form of an exhortation. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The word "transformed" suggests a change from dulness to brightness.

May 12.

CHOOSING AMUSEMENTS.

CHRIST does not frown upon pure and innocent pleasures. He went Himself, when He was on the earth, to places of enjoyment and festivity. He attended a marriage

feast, and contributed to the gladness of the guests. He accepted invitations to family feasts. There is not a trace of asceticism in all the story of His life. And He would do the same if He were here now. Pleasures that are pure, innocent, and helpful, or that contribute to the joy and good of others, He would enjoy. And what He would do if He were in our place, we, as His followers, may do. But there are amusements in which we may be sure He would not indulge. A tender spiritual instinct will readily discriminate between those in which He would and those in which He would not engage. This seems a reasonable and legitimate test for us, His followers.

May 13

QUIET WORKERS.

MANY of our Lord's earthly servants have caught His spirit, and work so quietly that they are scarcely recognised among men as workers. In their humility they do not even suppose themselves to be of any use, and mourn over their unprofitableness as Christ's servants, and yet in heaven they are written down as among the very noblest of His ministers. They do no great things, but their lives are full of radiations of blessing. There is a quiet and unconscious influence ever going forth from

them that falls like a benediction on every life that comes into their shadow.

May 14.

LAYING CARE ON GOD.

EVERYTHING that threatens to give us anxiety is to be taken at once to God. Nothing is too great to carry to Him. Does not He bear up all worlds? Does not He rule over all the affairs of the universe? Is there any matter in our life, how great soever it may seem to us, too hard for Him to manage? Is any perplexity too sore for Him to resolve? Is any human despair too dark for Him to illumine with hope? Is there any tangle or confusion out of which He cannot extricate us? Or is anything too small to bring to Him? Is He not our Father, and is He not interested in whatever concerns us? There is not one of the countless things that fly like specks of dust all through our daily life, tending to vex and fret us, that we may not take to God. And this is the cure which the Scriptures prescribe for care. The divine philosophy of living says: "Be anxious for nothing, but make everything known to God; in everything, by prayer and thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Refer every disturbing thing to Him, that He may bear the burden of it.

May 15.

PERSEVERE.

THERE is an inspired word which says: "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." What is meant by "well-doing"? It is doing right, obeying God's commands, fashioning our life after the pattern revealed by Him in His Word. It is not easy to do right. It costs us many a struggle. A life of well-doing implies a continual crucifying of self. Inclinations must be restrained. Desires must be curbed. The will must be yielded to God's will. The whole life must be brought into subjection to a law which is spiritual and heavenly.

May 16.

FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP.

WHEN we take a person into our life as a friend, we do not know what it may cost us to be faithful to our trust. Misfortune may befall our friend, and he may need our help in ways that will lay a heavy burden upon us. It may be in his business or in his secular affairs that he may suffer. Timely aid may enable him to overcome his difficulties, and attain to prosperous circumstances. It is in our power to render him the assistance that he

needs, without which he must succumb to failure. It will cost us personal inconvenience and trouble to do this. But he is our friend. We have taken him into our life, thus becoming partner in all his affairs. Can we withhold from him the help which he needs and which we can give, without breaking the holy covenant of friendship and failing in our sacred obligations to him?

May 17.

PATIENCE AT HOME.

WE all need patience. Without it we never really can make anything of our life. We need it in our homes. The very closeness and familiarity of the relations within our own doors make it hard at times for us to preserve perfect sweetness of spirit. There is much undiscipline as yet in most earthly families. We throw off our reserve and our carefulness, and are too apt now and then to speak or act disagreeably. We assert ourselves, and are wilful and exacting. It is easy, in the frictions that too often are felt in our homes, to lose our patience and speak unadvisedly and unkindly. Such impatient words hurt gentle hearts, sometimes irreparably. But wherever else we may fail in patience, it should not be in our own homes. Only the sweetest life

should have place there. We have not long to stay together, and we should be patient and gentle while we may.

May 18.

CHRIST-LIKENESS.

YOU say you want to be like Christ. You pray Him to print His own image on your heart. Here, then, is the image. It is no vague dream of perfection that we are to think of when we ask to be like Christ. The old monks thought that they were in the way to become like Christ when they went into the wilderness, away from men, to live in cold cells or on tall columns. But surely that is not the thought which "to minister" suggests. "To minister"—that is the Christ-like thing. Instead of fleeing away from men, we are to live among men, to serve them, to live for them, to seek to bless them, to do good, to give our lives.

May 19.

TRUST FOR THE DAY.

GOD gives us life by days, little single days. Each day has its own duties, its own needs, its own trials and temptations, its own

griefs and sorrows. God always gives us strength enough for the day as He gives it, with all that He puts into it. But if we insist on dragging back to-morrow's cares and piling them on top of to-day's, the strength will not be enough for the load. God will not add strength just to humour our whims of anxiety and distrust.

May 20.

STRIVE FOR STRENGTH.

STRENGTH is the glory of manhood. Yet it is not easy to be strong,—it is easier to be weak and to drift. It is easier for the boy in school not to work hard to get his lessons, but to let them go, and then at the last depend on some other boy to help him through. It is easier, when something happens to make you irritable, just to fly into a temper and say bitter words, than it is to keep quiet and self-controlled. It is easier, when you are with other young people and they are about to do something that you know to be unworthy, just to go with them, than it is to say: "I cannot do this wickedness against God." It is easier to be weak than to be strong.

May 12.

SUN AND SHADOW.

GOD'S way does not always lie in the sunshine; sometimes it runs into deep glooms. We are not always out of the way when we find ourselves facing obstacles and difficulties. When we cannot see where we are going we may be in the way everlasting, because God is guiding us. He leads us away many a time from the path we would have taken. Always He leads us away from whatever is wrong. God's way is a way of holiness, a white, clean way. It is the road to heaven.

May 22.

GOD'S WITHHOLDING.

WE should never think first of what will give us joy or comfort, but of what will work out God's holy will in us, and fit us for doing the service for Him which He wants us to render. Pain is ofttimes better for us than pleasure, loss than gain, sorrow than joy, disaster than deliverance. Faith should know that God's withholdings from us, when He does not give what we ask, are richer blessings than were He to open to us all the treasure-houses at whose doors we stand and knock with so great vehemence. Our unanswered prayers have just as real and as blessed answer as those which bring what we seek.

May 23.

LIFE'S HIDDEN BLESSINGS.

LET the young learn to miss no chance that life brings, and refuse no blessing which the commonest day presents, in whatever plainness of form. It may be only a dull, dry little seed which is held out to you, but in it is infolded a rare, sweet flower, which some day will fill your room with fragrance, if you accept it: you cannot have the flower then unless you take the seed to-day.

May 24.

GOD NEVER FORSAKES.

AN Arctic explorer was asked whether during the long months of slow starvation which he and his companions had endured they suffered greatly from the pangs of hunger. He replied that these pangs were forgotten in the feeling that their friends at home had forgotten them and were not coming to rescue them. There is no suffering so bitter as the sense of abandonment, the thought that nobody cares. But however painful and hard our condition may be, however men may wrong us and injure us, Christian faith assures us that God loves us, that He has not forgotten us, that He cares.

May 25.

DO GOOD ALWAYS.

OUR errand in this world is in a small way the same that Christ's errand was. He does not now Himself, in person, go about doing good—we are to go for Him. The only hands Christ has for doing kindnesses are our hands. The only feet He has to run the errands of love are our feet. The only voice to speak cheer to the troubled is our voice.

May 26.

DAILY VICTORIES.

THIS is the mission of Christianity in the world—to help men to be victorious, to whisper love wherever there is despair, to give cheer wherever there is discouragement. It goes forth to open prisons, to unbind chains, and to bring out captives. Its symbol is not a cross only,—that is one of its symbols, telling of the price of our redemption, telling of love that died,—but its final symbol is an open grave—open and empty. We know what that means. It tells of life, not of death; of life victorious over death. And we must not suppose that its promise is only for the final resurrection; it is for resurrection every day, every hour, over all death. It means unconquerable, unquenchable, indestructible, im-

mortal life at every point where death seems to have won a victory.

May 27.

TELL YOUR EXPERIENCE.

EACH one should speak out his own message. If it be only a single word, it will yet bless the earth. If only one of the flowers that bloom in summer days in the fields and gardens had refused to bloom, hiding its little gift of beauty, the world would be poorer and less lovely. If but one of the myriad stars in the heavens had refused to shine, keeping its little beam locked in its breast, the nights would be a little darker than they are. And every human life that fails to hear its message and learn its lesson or fails to speak it out, keeping it locked in the silence of the heart, leaves this earth a little poorer. But every life, even the lowliest, that learns of God, and then speaks out its message, adds something to the world's blessing and beauty.

May 28.

MAKING RECORDS.

ONE of our poets has told us that our life is a leaf of white paper on which each of us may write his word or two—and then comes

night. What are we writing on our little leaf? It should be something that will bless those who read it. It should be something fit to carry into eternity; it must be most beautiful and worthy for this. It should be something which we shall not be ashamed to meet again, for this leaf will appear in judgment, bearing our word or two, good or bad, just what we put on it; and by this we shall be judged. It is well that we do only things that are worth while; things that are right and true and pure and lovely, things that will last for ever.

May 29.

LOVE THE SWEETENER.

LOVE walks along life's ways with gentle step. Fragrant flowers grow in its path, and the air is always sweeter when it has passed by. It is kindly, thoughtful, pitiful, and compassionate. It has patience with human faults, and looks with an eye of tender love on those who have fallen. It is tolerant of others who, through weakness, err or turn aside. It is forbearing and long-suffering. It meekly endures injury and wrong, giving sweet love for the hurts of unkindness. It sees eagerly and joyfully the good things in others, and has a wide cloak of charity for their failings and sins. It is merciful, forgiving not seven times only,

but seventy times seven. Conscious of its own fault and evil, it is lenient toward the blemishes it sees in others.

May 30.

THE TRUE EVANGEL.

LOVE is the essential thing in preparing one for being a helper of others. It is not enough for the preacher to declare to all men that God loves them,—the preacher must love them too if he would make them believe in the divine love for them. The true evangel is the love of God interpreted in a human life. No other will win men's confidence and faith. We must show the tenderness of God in our tenderness. We must reveal the compassion of God in our compassion. God so loved that He gave,—we must so love as to give.

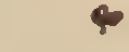
May 31.

SORROW A REVEALER.

ONE tells of a company of tourists on the Alps who were overtaken by night; and after groping in the deep darkness for a time were compelled to settle down and wait until morning. A thunderstorm arose during the darkness, and a vivid lightning flash showed

them that they had stopped on the very edge of a precipice. Another step forward and they would have fallen to their death. The lightning flashes of sorrow ofttimes reveal to Christian people the peril in which they are living, and lead them to turn to safer paths. Many a redeemed one in glory will look back to the time of a great grief as the time of seeing God which led to penitence and faith.

JUNE



I go to prove my soul!
I see my way as birds their trackless way—
I shall arrive!

. . . . . .

In some time, His good time, I shall arrive:
He guides me and the bird. In His good time!

Robert Browning.

JUNE

June 1.

TASKS MADE EASY.

NO doubt even angels have errands and tasks given to them which in themselves would be hard, but which become easy, a delight, because they are accepted as parts of the will of God for them. This is the great secret of joy in service. Anything that is God's will for us it should be gladness for us to do. If we love God deeply, everything that He wants us to do is a joy for us to do. If we love not God, then even the commonest, simplest duties which His will requires are hard and dreary tasks for us.

June 2.

HARD-WON BLESSINGS.

IT costs to become a friend of Christ. His followers are transformed—old things pass away, and all things become new. Those who believe on Him are fashioned into His image.

But these blessings do not come easily. The heavenly graces are not put into our life as one might hang up lovely pictures on the walls to adorn a home. They can become ours only through our own experience. They must be wrought into our life in a sense by our own hands. We must work out our own salvation, although it is God that worketh in us both to will and to work.

June 3.

A MATTER OF CHARACTER.

MEN find in the world just what is in themselves. One man says it is a world of sadness. There is nothing in it but sorrow. All its songs are songs of tears. He has not found a bit of blue, nor heard a note of gladness in all his rounds. Poor man! it is only the gloom of his own heart that he is reporting. He has in him no capacity for seeing beauty or for hearing joy notes. Another man goes out over precisely the same course, hearing the same sounds, and seeing the same sights, and he reports that he found only music and loveliness everywhere. The world was full of sweet songs. On every spot flowers bloomed, everywhere light was shining.

June 4.

DEATH ENDS NOTHING GOOD.

WHAT a dreary thought it is, that the dead rise not! Think what it would mean to us. Would it be worth while to take such pains with our lives as many of us do if death ended all? There are many people who give up pleasure, ease, and comfort to have their intellects disciplined. Would this pay if at death all goes down into the grave never to come up again? There are thousands who live lives of self-denial. They crucify their natural desires, that the better part of them may be developed. Would this pay if the grave is the goal of life? Think, too, of love. Souls are knit together in this life in union which makes them as one. How terrible if love is only for the earth, if it goes out at death! Thank God, there is not a shadow of truth in it. The trained mind is for immortality. The disciplined nature is fitted for honour in heaven. Love never fails. The grave ends nothing. We shall rise again.

June 5.

WE ARE HIS WITNESSES.

SOME people are ashamed of the Gospel. They profess to be Christians, but they have not courage to confess Christ out in the

world. It is easy to confess Him where everybody is Christ's friend, and where all are confessing Him. But the fewer Christians there are in a place or company, the more reason is there for the few to be courageous for Him. Miss Havergal tells of going to a boarding school just after she had confessed Christ. She was young and timid, was startled to find that in a school family of a hundred she was the only Christian. Her first feeling was that she could not avow her love for Christ, with all that company of worldly girls around her. But her second thought was that she was the only one Christ had there to represent Him. This thought was more strengthening, and from that hour she quietly but firmly took her place in the school as a friend of Christ. It ought to help us, whenever we stand amid enemies of Christ, to remember that He has put us there to represent Him.

June 6.

CHRIST IS THE JUSTIFIER.

SOME people fancy that their morality is enough to save them. As well hope to climb to the stars by going up the tallest mountain, as to gain heaven by the best moralities. No man can live well enough to merit salvation. No man can live without sin,

and "The wages of sin is death." There have been some very holy people in this world, who have lived very close to God, but there never has been one who was received into heaven on the ground of his own good works. The law is so broad and deep, extending not only to acts and words, but to thoughts, motives, feelings, and affections, that it is utterly impossible for any fallen being perfectly to meet all its demands.

If this verse were the last word of the Bible; if the law of inspiration revealed to us only the law and our sinfulness, inability and guilt, declaring that by our own works none of us ever can be justified in God's sight,—it would be a dark and terrible finality.

June 7.

TRANSFIGURING PRAYER.

IT was as Jesus was praying that He was transfigured. Prayer always transfigures. When we pray we go into the very presence of God, and that should brighten our life. Prayer lifts up our thoughts and feelings from earthly to heavenly things, and that should make our face shine. True prayer brings our will into submission to God's will, for we cannot pray truly until we say, "Thy will, not mine, be

done." Thus it brings quiet peace into the heart, and this transfigures the life. Prayer also drives out all bitter and unloving thoughts, for we cannot pray unless we forgive and love. This, too, has a transfiguring influence.

June 8.

LET IN THE SUN.

LET the sunshine into your heart, these bright days—ye who are young—God's sunshine of grace and truth. Read good, bright, helpful books, that will leave great and lofty thoughts in your mind. Especially read the Bible daily, study and ponder it, and store its divine words in your heart. Do beautiful things, things of love, of unselfishness, of helpfulness; things that are true, honourable, just, pure. Nothing darkens life's winter days as do memories of sinful things. Nothing makes life so sweet in old age as does the memory of right, good, and kindly things wrought along the years.

June 9.

THE COMMON TASK.

THERE are many people who think their greatest obstacle in the way of spiritual growth and transformed character is in the

drudgeries to which they are indentured by their condition. They fancy that if they could be freed from these, and could have leisure for reading, for study, and for social fellowship, they would grow into far more radiant beauty of character. But this is a mistaken impression. The one only perfectly transfigured life the world has ever known was spent, "not with a book, but with a hammer and saw." The school of common task-work, with its perpetual round of dreary duties, is the best place in the world in which to grow into noble spiritual culture.

June 10.

MAKING OUR SURROUNDINGS.

IN a far truer sense than many of us are aware do our hearts make our world for us. The things we behold are but the shadows of the things that are in us. If we have bright pictures in our heart, the whole world, wherever we go, will be a picture-gallery. Every scene will be a panorama of beauty. The most repulsive objects will wear a tinge of loveliness. On the other hand, a sombre, cheerless heart clothes the whole world in shadow and gloom.

June 11.

JOY MAKERS.

THERE are those who live to give cheer and encouragement. They may have burdens, or even sore griefs, of their own, but they hide them away deep in their own hearts, not carrying them so as to cast their shadows on any other life. When you meet them, it is as when you go out on a June morning under a cloudless sky, with dewy fragrance breathing all around and bird songs filling the air. There is a loving radiance in their countenances. Even if you do not know them personally, and merely meet them without salutation on the street, there is something in their expression that leaves a benediction on you, whose holy influence follows you all day like the memory of a lovely picture or the refrain of a sweet song.

June 12.

LOOKING FORWARD.

WITH immortality glowing before us, our brief years on earth should be marked by earnestness, reverence, love, and faithfulness. Soon we shall break out of our narrow circle, and traverse the boundless fields that we see now only in the far-away and momentary glimpse. But it will be a blessed thing if we can get into

our hearts even here something of the personal consciousness of our immortality, with its limitless possessions and possibilities, and feel something in our souls of the power of an endless life.

June 13.

NOT HERE; HEREAFTER.

IT is not in vain that we continue our well-doing, that we obey God's commandments, that we devote our lives in self-sacrificing service to men for Christ's sake. What seems to be loss is gain. The good man may seem to have more trouble than his unchristian neighbour. His business may not appear to prosper so well. His ventures may miscarry. His faithfulness may bring him human enmity and even persecution. But life's accounts are not always settled at once. Harvest does not follow sowing immediately. It is so in nature. There are days and months when the seed seems to have perished. Afterward, however, it yields fruit. It is the same in spiritual life. For a time there may seem to be no blessing in well-doing. But in the end righteousness succeeds. "He that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

June 14.

ACCORDING TO OUR FAITH.

WE should learn that the measure of faith is always the measure of God's giving. We should go to God, making large requests, and should never be discouraged by delays, by apparent repulses, by obstacles or hindrances. God has large things for us, and we should take all from His hand. In the words, "Be it done unto thee even as thou wilt," heaven is thrown open to our faith. So upon ourselves is the responsibility of the less or the greater blessings which we receive from our bountiful God.

June 15.

LOVE ITS OWN REWARD.

OUR Lord Himself loved and gave and blessed many, at last giving His very life, but few came to give Him blessing and sweetness of love in His own soul. It is more divine to love than to be loved. At least, God's will for us is that we should love, pouring out our heart's richest treasures upon others, not asking meanwhile for any return. Loving is its own best return and reward.

June 16.

HUNGRY HEARTS.

IN nature the tree's fruits feed the hunger of men. No tree consumes its own fruits; it drops them for those who come to gather them. This suggests that we should not be selfish in our fruit-bearing. We should not seek the culture of our characters merely for our own sake. Our aim should be to provide something in our lives that will feed others and bless the world. All about us are hungry hearts. There are those who crave sympathy and love, those who yearn for comfort, those who desire to be saved. We are so to live that our lives shall yield bread for these.

June 17.

SEEKING GOD.

NOT literally all who seek find. The seeking must be earnest. There is a remarkable word in one of the old prophets: "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me *with all your heart.*" The seeking must also be for good things. If our quest is for sinful things, or for worldly good that would work in us spiritual harm, God will not give us what we seek. Then we must live right. "No good thing will He withhold from them *that walk uprightly.*" The thing itself

must be good; and we must walk in paths of obedience, or there is no promise of reward for our quest.

June 18.

GOD'S CANDLES.

THE mission of every Christian is to bear witness of the Light. The Bible says that the spirit of man is the Candle of the Lord; but in our natural, unregenerate state the candle is unlighted. It is capable of being lighted; but until the divine Spirit touches it with heavenly fire and sets it ablaze, it is dead and dark. When the candle is lighted, however, it shines within us and makes us light. Thus it is that we bear witness of the Light: it is Christ in us that shines; our light is but a little of His light breaking through our dull souls. Every one that sees us sees in us a few gleams of the true Light.

June 19.

NEARNESS TO GOD.

IF we would learn what God's will for us in life's common affairs is, we should always keep near to Christ, so near that we can speak to Him any moment, ask Him any question,

and let our hand rest in His. He always finds some way of making His will known to those who thus trust Him and look to Him for direction.

June 20.

ALL SERVICE THE SAME.

THE bird praises God by singing; the flower pays its tribute in fragrant incense as its censer swings in the breeze; the tree shakes down fruits from its bending boughs; the stars pour out their silver beams to gladden the earth; the clouds give their blessings in gentle rain; yet all with equal faithfulness fulfil their mission. So among Christ's redeemed servants, one serves by incessant toil in the home, caring for a large family; another by silent example as a sufferer, patient and uncomplaining; another with the pen, sending forth words that inspire, help, cheer, and bless; another by the living voice, whose eloquence moves men, aud starts impulses to better, grander living; yet each and all of these may be serving Christ acceptably, hearing at the close of each day the whispered word, "Well done."

June 21.

THE HEALER.

PHYSICIANS in their rounds do not stop at the homes of the well, but of the sick. Surgeons on the field of battle do not pay attention to the unhurt, the unwounded; they bend over those who have been torn by shot or shell, or pierced by bayonet or sabre. So it is with God in His movements through this world: it is not to the whole and well, but to the wounded and stricken, that He comes with sweetest tenderness. Jesus said of His mission: "He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted."

June 22.

CONSECRATED LIVES.

CONSECRATION must first be a spirit in us, a spirit of love, a life in our hearts which shall flow out to everyone we desire to bless and help and make better. Thackeray tells of one who kept his pockets full of acorns, and wherever he saw a vacant place in his estate he took out one and planted it. In like manner he exhorts his readers to do with kind words as they go through life, never losing a chance of saying one. "An acorn costs nothing, but it may sprout into a prodigious bit of timber." To such a life true consecration prompts and

inspires. It takes lowliness of mind in many of us to accept such obscure services. We think too often of some great things to be given to us to do when we devote ourselves to Christ.

June 23.

FRIENDSHIP'S BEST GIFT.

THERE are better things to give than gold and silver. If we can put new life and hope into the heart of a discouraged man, so that he rises out of his weak despair, and takes his place again in the ranks of active life, we have done a far better thing for him than if we had put our hands into our pockets and given him money to help him nurse a little longer his miserable and unmanly despair. The truest sympathy is not that weak emotion which only sits down and weeps with a sufferer, imparting no courage or hope, but that wiser love which, while it is touched by his pain and grief, and feels tenderly toward him, seeks to put new strength into his heart, to enable him to endure his sufferings in a victorious way.

June 24

ENCOURAGERS.

MANY men sink under their burdens or faint in their battles, because no one ever thinks to express the kindly interest and

appreciation which are in his heart. One of the best services any one can render to his fellows is always to be an encourager. How rarely do we say the hearty word of cheer which would warm the blood and make it tingle!

June 25.

NO STANDING STILL.

THE law of Christian life is progress—progress by giving up the good to take the better. We never come to a point where we may rest content because we have reached the full measure of our attainment and achievement. Heaven lies above us, however high we climb. There always are better things to gain, however full our hands may be of goodly treasures. Sweet as is the joy that fills our hearts to-day, there is a still sweeter song that we may learn to sing.

June 26.

BEAUTIFUL LIVING.

IF we knew that this present day were our very last, we should certainly strive to make it a most beautiful day. We should fill it with all loving service and gentle ministries. We

should not mar it with selfishness and ugly tempers. We should awake every energy of our being to its best power, and should work with all our might: we should not have one moment to spare for discontent, for idle dreaming, for complaint or murmuring, for pride, for regret; we should crowd the day to its last moment with love's fidelities and duties. Since any day may really be our last, we should live continually as if it were the last. We should make each day that God gives us beautiful enough to be the end of life.

June 27.

THOUGHTFUL FOR OTHERS.

THOUGHTFULNESS is one of the truest and best tests of a fine character. Thoughtlessness is rudeness, boorishness. It is selfishness, cold-heartedness. It is unrefined. It is cruel and unkind. Thoughtfulness is refined. It is love working in all delicate ways. It is unselfishness which forgets itself, and thinks only of others. It is love which demands not to be served, to be honoured, to be helped, but thinks continually of serving and honouring others. Thoughtlessness is "want of heart," and he who has a gentle heart cannot but be thoughtful. Love is always thoughtful.

June 28.

ROUGH OR SMOOTH.

WE can easily worship the "sweet will of God" when this will is indeed sweet to our natural taste. But how is it when God directs us to go the way we do not want to go, to do the thing that is unpleasant, that will cause pain or require sacrifice or loss? How is it when the voice of God, answering to our question, bids us take the path that leads to a cross; bids us turn away from the pleasant thing that we crave; bids us give up the friendship that has grown dear to our heart, but is drawing us away from God; bids us give into the Father's hand the child or the loved one we so desire to keep with us? "In all thy ways" means the hard ways as well as the easy ways, the thorny path as well as the path of flowers; when it breaks our heart as well as when it gives us joy or gladness.

June 29.

MELLOWED BY TRIAL.

MANY of the finest things in character are the fruits of pain. Many a Christian enters trial, cold, worldly, unspiritual, with the best possibilities of his nature still locked up in his life, and emerges from the experience a little

later with spirit softened, mellowed, and enriched, the lovely things brought out. A photographer carries his picture into a darkened room, that he may bring out its features. He says the light of the sun would mar the impression on the sensitised plate. There are features of spiritual beauty which cannot be produced in a life in the glare of human joy and prosperity. God brings out in many a soul its loveliest qualities when the curtain is drawn and the light of human joy is shut out.

June 30.

DYING TO LIVE.

NO human life can ever truly please God by saving itself, by keeping itself from self-denial and sacrifice. No matter how magnificent its natural powers, nor how graceful its form and its accomplishments, it has neither strength nor beauty in heaven's sight until it has devoted itself to service of love. It must die to live.

JULY

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard:
Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it by-and-by.

Robert Browning.

JULY

July 1.

THE NEW CREATION.

THE new man is the Christian man. We see at once, however, that more than reformation is required. He is "created," and only God can create. We cannot change our own heart so that we shall have holy feelings, desires, affections. We have a part in it, of course. God does not work on us as the sculptor works on the marble, hewing it into any shape he desires, without any consciousness or acquiescence or will in the stone. We are not blocks of marble; we are immortal beings, and, as such, all work on us is wrought through our own will, affections, desires. We are exhorted to "put on the new man," as if it were altogether our work. As we obey God, His spirit will work in us, and produce the change, which we could never of ourselves produce. We have also the pattern after which we are to fashion our new life — "after God."

July 2.

LOVE IS THE LAW.

"IN love." Love is always to be the law of life. Love must decide all questions. Our liberty must never be so exercised that it will hurt our neighbour. Paul is talking of eating meat that had first been carried to an idol temple and then sold. He knew that the meat was not affected by this bit of superstition. But some weak people thought it had been defiled, and that it was a sin to eat it. "Better give up your meat," said Paul to the strong Christians, "than grieve your weak brethren." It is "liberty" to eat, regardless of your brother's feelings; but it is "love" to deny yourself for his sake. There are "other people," and we must always think of them in living our own life.

It is astonishing, too, how thinking of them by the rule of love will cut into our plans for ourselves. At every point we are met by the question, "How will this affect the other people about me?" "Liberty!" Oh yes; but there is a higher law—love.

July 3.

CHRIST'S PASTURE FIELDS.

THE Bible is Christ's pasture land, and the pasture there is always good. Every chapter is a field of rich grace. There also are

found trees of all kinds, with abundance of fruits. The fields of provision are also Christ's pasture fields. In the common ways of life they find food waiting for them. We may trust Christ absolutely, because we know that wherever He leads us He is taking us to some bit of green grass. When the shepherd led his flock through the dark valley, it was to get into a bit of pasture on the other side. Sometimes Christ leads His people through sorrow, struggle, trial, loss, but it is always because this is the way to something good which He has in waiting for them.

July 4.

NO FRIENDSHIP IN SIN.

SIN does not bind bonds of affection about human lives. Sinning together does not make people friends. A man spends all he has at a saloon, but when he has no more the saloon-keeper into whose till he has emptied all does not become his friend, taking him into his house as a brother and providing for his wants.

When a man has gone down into the depths of dissipation with evil companions, and at last becomes conscious of his degradation, he will not seek help or comfort from those with whom he has sinned. When he is sick or dying, he

will not send for a companion of his evil life to give him counsel or to tell him how to find the way home.

July 5.

WORKING AND WAITING.

THE way to be ready for Christ's coming is not to sit down in idleness and wait and watch for His appearance in the clouds, but to keep at one's work with diligence. A Christian woman was told by her physician that she could not live a great while, and that she might die any hour. She did not, however, drop her work and shut herself away; she went on with her usual duties, only with greater diligence than before. Many people in such a case would drop active tasks and spend the time remaining in Bible reading and prayer. But this woman's way was better.

July 6.

RESIST EVIL.

IT is a sad thing for any of us, if, instead of growing daily into a clearer, fuller likeness to Christ, our spiritual life is failing and the features of our Lord's beauty are becoming dimmer and dimmer in us. People say: "I cannot help it, I cannot resist the incessant grind

and pressure of the worldly life about me. I cannot keep my heart gentle and my spirit sweet amid all that is mean, unjust, selfish, unreasonable, and even cruel, about me." But while never easy, it is always possible to be more than conquerors over all these antagonistic influences, through Him that loved us.

July 7.

PASSING ON EXPERIENCES.

"WHEN thou art converted," said the Master to Peter—"when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." His meaning was that a new power of personal helpfulness was to come to him through his sad experience which he should use in strengthening others to meet temptation. Then, when he had passed through that terrible night, when he had been lifted up again, when he had crept back to the feet of his risen Lord and had been forgiven and reinstated, he had double cause for gratitude —that he himself had been saved from hopeless wreck and restored, and, still more, that he was now a better man, prepared, in a higher sense than before, to be an apostle and a patient, helpful friend to others in similar trial.

July 8.

NEVER-FAILING MERCY.

WE sin against God continually, and His mercy never fails. His love bears with all our neglect, forgetfulness, ingratitude, and disobedience, and never grows impatient with us. We live only by His forbearance. The wrongs He endures from us are infinite in comparison with the trivial grievances we must endure from our fellow-men. When we think of this, can we grow impatient of the little irritations of daily fellowship? We are taught to pray every day, "Forgive us our debts *as we forgive* our debtors." How can we pray this petition sincerely, and continue to be exacting, resentful, revengeful, or even to be greatly pained by the unkind treatment of others?

July 9.

THE OTHER SIDE.

A TOURIST writes of stopping at Giesbach to look at the wonders of its waterfalls. The party had to pass over one of the falls on a slender bridge through the drenching water, with the wild torrents dashing beneath. It was a trying experience. But once through, a glorious picture burst upon them. There were rainbows above, beneath, and circling on all sides. So the spray of sorrow falls now, and we may have

to walk through floods and pitiless torrents, and all may seem a strange, inexplicable mystery. But there will come a time when we shall have passed through these shadows of grief, and when we shall stand amid the splendour of rainbows and on the shores of glory. Then we will understand, and see love in every pang and tear.

July 10.

LIFE'S PURPOSE.

OUR life is not in any sense our own. Its purpose is not fulfilled unless it is lived to accomplish the end for which it was created and redeemed. We begin to study the Scriptures and to ask what is the chief end of life, and we have not to read between the lines to find the answer. Everything has been made with some design. Even a grain of sand has its uses. It helps build up the mountain, or it forms part of the great wall that holds the sea in its place, or it helps by its infinitesimal weight to balance the system of worlds. A drop of water has its purposes and uses. Creeping into the bosom of the drooping flower or sinking down to its roots, it revives it. It may help to quench the thirst of a dying soldier. It may paint a rainbow on the clouds. It may help to float great ships or add its little plash to the chorus of ocean's majestic music. And if such minute things have

their purpose, how grand must be the end for which each human life was made.

July 11.

NEW EVERY DAY.

ALL life is new. There is not a step of it of which it may not be said to us: "You have not passed this way heretofore." Every new-born child enters a world it has never been in before. Every day's path is new to each one of us. We say our life is only dull routine. We rise each morning to go through the same round we went through yesterday. We walk along the same roads every day for years. Life seems to us to have no variety. Yet really each day is new and strange. We do not know what experiences it will bring to us, what joys or sorrows, what struggles, what responsibilities, what new revealings, what new duties. Each morning the voice of God whispers to us: "You have not passed this way heretofore; therefore keep your eye on your guide."

July 12.

OUR NEIGHBOUR.

THE good Samaritan is our Lord's answer to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" and the good Samaritan's neighbour was a bitter

enemy, who, in other circumstances, would have spurned him from his presence. Other people may not be beautiful in their character, nor congenial in their habits, manners, modes of life, or disposition; they may even be unkind to us, unjust, unreasonable, in strict justice altogether undeserving of our favour; yet if we persist in being called Christians ourselves, we owe them the love that thinketh no evil, that seeketh not its own, that beareth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth. That is, we owe other people service. Serving goes with loving. We cannot love truly and not serve. Love without serving is but an empty sentiment, a poor mockery.

July 13.

HIDDEN FAULTS.

IF we are living truly, we want to find every flaw or blemish, of whatever kind, there is in us. He is a coward who shrinks from the discovery of his own faults. We should be glad always to learn of any hidden unloveliness in ourselves. Someone says: "Count yourself richer that day you discover a new fault in yourself,—not richer because it is there, but richer because it is no longer a hidden fault; and if you have not yet found all your faults, pray to have them revealed to you, even if the

revelation must come in a way that hurts your pride."

July 14.

RADIANT CHRISTIANS.

CHRIST wants His friends to be glad. There is an utter incongruity in a sad and mournful Christian life. By its very nature true religion is joyous. Our sins are forgiven. We are adopted into God's family. We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. The covenant of love arches its shelter over us all the while. All things in this world work together for our good, and then glory waits for us beyond death's gate. With all this blessed heritage, why should we be mournful and sad? While we enjoy the smile of Christ, the consciousness of His love, the assurance of His forgiveness, and the hope of heaven and eternal life, what should make us sad? We should have radiant faces.

July 15.

COMPLETE OBEDIENCE.

"WHATSOEVER He saith unto you, do it." Every word in this sentence is emphatic and intense in its meaning. "Whatsoever *He* saith." There is no other one who

has a right to command us. We belong to Christ because He has redeemed us. He is our only Lord and Master. "*Whatsoever* He saith." We may not choose some of His commands for obedience, and some for neglect, inattention, or rejection. We are not to do the pleasant things He bids us to do, and leave undone the things that are not according to our own taste and feeling. We are to do even the things that cost pain and personal sacrifice. It was thus that Jesus Himself did the will of His Father. That will took Him to His Cross; but He did not shrink from accepting it when He saw the way growing dark before Him, or when he felt the thorns under His feet, and the burdens increasing into crushing weight upon His shoulders. If we would walk in His steps, our obedience must be complete.

July 16.

IMPERFECT ACHIEVEMENT.

AN old painter, after standing long in silent meditation before his canvas, with hands crossed meekly on his breast and his head bent reverently, said: "May God forgive me that I did not do it better." There are many of us who ought to have the same experience of penitence as we contemplate the things we have done. We should continually implore forgive-

ness for doing our work so poorly, for we are not doing our best. If only we would learn to put all the energy of our souls into each piece of work we do, we should make a radiant record for ourselves.

July 17.

A PRECIOUS FRIENDSHIP.

THAT Christ should condescend thus to give to us sinful men His pure, divine friendship is the greatest wonder of the world; but there is no doubt of the fact. No human friendship can ever be half so close and intimate as that which the lowliest of us may enjoy with our Saviour. If we but realise our privileges, the enriching that will come to our lives through this glorious relationship will be better than all gold and gems.

July 18.

COMMON DUTIES.

COMMON duties are the steps that lead upward and heavenward. God lights only one step of the path at a time; but, as we take that step, the light falls on another, and so on and on, thus lighting the whole path for our feet, until we are led at last to the gate that opens into heaven. The way, therefore, to find

out what God's plan is for our life is to surrender ourselves to Him in simple consecration, and then take up, hour by hour, the plain duties He brings to our hand.

July 19.

STEPPING STONES.

IN every life there are mistakes and sins. The holiest do not live perfectly. The strongest are liable to fall in sudden and unexpected temptation. The wisest will commit grave errors and follies at the same time. We should know well in such cases how to deal with our sins. They must not be simply self-condoned, and left lying in the path behind us, while we hurry on; nor must they bring despair to our hearts as we sorrow over them; they must be sincerely and heartily repented of, and forgiveness for them sought at the feet of Him we have offended and grieved. Then we must rise from disaster and defeat stronger, purer, nobler, through Christ victorious over our own sins, and a conqueror over our own defeat.

July 20.

EASYGOING RELIGION.

SOME Christian people never have learned the deep joy of the Christian life, because they never have gone beneath the surface in

loving Christ, and in consecration to Him. Our religion is too easygoing. We think we are fulfilling our duty if we attend church once a Sunday when the weather is clear, if we give a few cents a week to God's cause, if we kneel morning and evening and say a little prayer. Yet these are only one-mile excursions in religion, and the blessing does not lie at the end of the little conventional mile — it lies farther on, at the end of the second mile.

July 21.

LOVE'S DEBTORS.

WE are debtors to all men—we owe love and love's service to everyone. God sends us to carry blessing to each person we meet. It may be a lowly one who stands before us to-morrow, one who is unworthy, one who has sinned; it may be an enemy, one who yesterday wronged us, spoke bitter things of us, tried to injure us. No matter. We are sent from God with something for this very person, whoever or whatever he may be. The love of Christ in us says to this man, "I long to impart unto you some spiritual gift," and we dare not refuse this ministry of love to any being under heaven. Then we do not know how sorely he needs us, how hungry he is for love, in how great peril he is this very moment—sent

to us perhaps as a refuge, that we may be the bosom of Christ to him, that he may be saved by a word, a look, a kindness, a prayer of ours.

July 22.

MINISTERING TO OTHERS.

WHEN Christ put the thought of His mission into a sentence, it was: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Not otherwise can we conceive of our mission as followers of Christ. We must follow Him in self-denial and sacrifice, in the true laying of our life upon the altar of love. It is this that the world needs to-day—the life of Christ repeated in the lives of His people, in lowly services that shall fill the earth with the fragrance of love, and carry blessing into every nook and corner of it.

July 23.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF LIFE.

NO one can live your life for you. Friends may help you by encouragement, by sympathy, by cheer, by affection's warm inspirations, by counsel, by guidance; but, after

all, in the innermost meaning of your life, you must live it yourself. No one can make your choices for you; you must make them for yourself. No one can have faith in God for you. No one can believe in Christ for you. No one can meet the obligations of the moral law for you. No one but yourself can get your sins forgiven. No one can do your duty for you. No one can meet your responsibility for you. A thousand other people all about you may be faithful to their trust; but if you fail in faithfulness, their faithfulness will not be of any avail for you. There is no vicariousness of this kind in life; you must live your own life.

July 24.

SIMPLE GOODNESS.

AFTER all, there are few ways in which most of us can do better service for Christ in this world than just by being good. Sir Walter Scott's farewell to Lockhart contained wise counsel: "Be a good man, my dear." Cleverness shines more brightly in society; eloquence makes itself heard more widely, and elicits huzzas from the throng; wealth yields a greater show of splendour, gives more worldly power for the time, and gets itself talked about by more people; conspicuous almsgiving is more praised of men—it has its reward,

but plain simple goodness is likely to have as bright a crown and as high a place in heaven as any of her more showy sisters. It is certain, too, that nothing makes a deeper and more lasting impression on human lives; and this is the best test of the real value of living.

July 25.

GOOD AND BAD GIFTS.

THE world offers attractive things,—pleasures, gains, promises of honour and delight. To the eye of sense these appear to be life's best things. But too often they enfold bitterness and hurt, the fruit of evil. At the bottom of the cup are dregs of poison. On the other hand, the things that God gives appear sometimes unattractive, undesirable, even repulsive. We shrink from accepting them. But they enfold, in their severe and unpromising form, the blessings of divine love.

July 26.

GOD'S COMFORTS.

THE reason many persons find so little comfort in their troubles is because they do not accept them as sent from God, nor expect to receive blessing from them. They think only of getting through them in the best way they can, and then of getting over them at

length, as nature's slow processes bring healing. But there is a better way. God's comfort can keep the heart sweet and unhurt in the midst of the sorest trials, and bring the life through the darkest hours, shining in transfigured beauty.

July 27.

WORK AND GROWTH.

WORK is the only means of growth. Instead of being a curse, as some would have us believe, work is a means of measureless good. Not to work is to keep always an undeveloped hand, or heart, or brain. The things which work may achieve are not half so important as that which work does in us. A genial writer has given us a new beatitude—"Blessed be drudgery!" and in a delightful essay proves that we owe to what we speak of ordinarily as drudgery the best things in our life and character.

July 28.

RIPENING FROSTS.

SOME fruits do not ripen until the frosts come; some lives do not yield their richest and best character until the frosts of sorrow have fallen upon them. Many Christians go on through joyous days, amid prosperity, pure in

motive, earnest in activity, yet not bringing forth the best fruits. By and by trouble comes, adversity, sorrow, loss, and under the keen frosts the fruit is ripened. After that they have a sweeter spirit, with more love for Christ, with deeper spirituality, and a larger measure of consecration.

July 29.

DUTY TRANSFORMED.

WE do not like the word duty; it seems to mean something hard and unpleasant. But when we accept it from our Master and take it up with love in our heart, it is transformed for us into something beautiful. A traveller in South Africa tells of picking up a rough pebble. As he turned it over in his hand his trained eye saw the gleaming of a diamond. Duty may have a rough, an unattractive crust, but he who accepts it and looks at it through eyes of love sees in it a service for Christ which will yield the heavenly treasure of peace and joy.

July 30.

CHRIST COMPLETING LIVES.

WEAKNESS was not beautiful to the eye of Christ; it was something imperfect, faulty, lacking. It was something, too, which

He sought to bring back to its true, normal state. He came not to destroy, but to fulfil, that is, to fill full. He rejected nothing because it was in ruin; He sought to build up the ruin into a temple of beauty. In a most wonderful way was this the mission of Jesus Christ. He came to a lost world to be its Saviour. He came to make the weak strong, the soiled white and clean, the outcast children of God.

July 31.

THE REALITY OF CHRIST.

YOU cannot see Christ, but you believe that He is true, loving, faithful, touched with sympathy when you suffer; that He knows all about you, and loves you with a love personal, deep, tender, strong, everlasting. You know, too, that He has all power, and that all His power is yours to support, keep, bless, deliver, protect, save you. You know that He has all wisdom—wisdom that never errs, that never counsels rashly, indiscreetly, short-sightedly—and that all this wisdom is for the guidance of your life, the ordering of your steps. As we think along these lines the unseen Christ becomes very real to us.

AUGUST

Grant us, O Lord, the grace to bear
The little pricking thorn;
The hasty word that seems unfair;
The twang of truths well worn;
The jest which makes our weakness plain
The darling plan o'erturned;
The careless touch upon our pain;
The slight we have not earned;
The rasp of care;—dear Lord, to-day,
Lest all these fretting things
Make needless grief, oh, give, we pray
The heart that trusts and sings.

AUGUST

Aug. 1.

IGNORANT BLINDNESS.

WE miss a great deal in this world because of our ignorance. Life is full of illustrations of loss through not knowing. Two people walk out through the country. One has the artist's eye, and his soul is entranced by what he sees. The other has two eyes in his head, but sees nothing with them. He does not know of the beauty that glows everywhere, and misses all the enjoyment which would be his if he had learned the art of seeing. Two persons go into an art gallery. One sees in the great pictures nothing but patches of colour. The other sees that which thrills his soul. These are suggestions of what we miss by not knowing. One man looks at the Bible with a certain sort of superstitious reverence, but sees nothing in it. Another reads the words, and they glow with life and beauty.

Aug. 2.

A REASON FOR HAPPINESS.

NOT access only, but transformation at length into the likeness and glory of God. It may seem ofttimes that the present gains of faith in Christ are not very great. But this is not the end. There is a future in which there shall be compensation for earth's ills and losses to all who are in Christ. We are some day to be like Christ, and to be with Him in glory.

Here is a man journeying along a lonely road at night. The storm beats about him. He is weary and faint, but in his heart there is the vision of a beautiful and happy home to which he is going. Loved ones are there, waiting for him. There he will find shelter from the storm, food for his hunger, rest to relieve his weariness. This vision of happiness a little way before him makes him forget the hardness and discomfort of the journey. So it is that the "hope of the glory of God" should cheer us as we move through the world's darkness and sorrow and trial.

Aug. 3.

SAFE TREASURE.

IT is possible to gather riches that we can carry with us. A ship was wrecked on a desert island in ancient times. There were

many merchants on board with their wealth, and they saved nothing from the sea but their own life. They were making great lament over their losses. There was a poet on board, however, and he was calm and at peace amid all the misery of the merchants. When asked why he bore his misfortune so calmly, he said the others had their treasures in their goods and had lost all; but that he had his in brain and heart and had lost nothing. When a worldly man dies he loses all his treasures in the wreck of his ventures on death's cold rocks. But when a godly man dies he carries his treasures over with him into the other world.

Aug. 4.

AN ILL-KEPT LAW.

UNTIL we think about it we do not realise how dimly the law of love for one's neighbour was understood in those days. Indeed, the parable of the Good Samaritan was a new revelation to the world. "A certain man . . . fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him . . . leaving him half dead." The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is a type of many roads in this world. Every day men and women are robbed, not robbed of money, perhaps, but of their very life, of things in their life which are greater treasures than gold or

silver or gems. Think of temptation's work. Think of what selfishness and greed are doing all the while for thousands of people.

Aug. 5

TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

WE may be able to state all that the creeds say about Jesus Christ, and yet the really important question for us is, "Who do *you* say that I am?" It is very important that we have a true view of the Person of Christ. If we think of Him as only a man, the best of men, the wisest of teachers, we may learn much from His words and from His life; but can one only a man be to us all that we need in Him to whom we have to look for salvation?

Another question equally important is, "What is Christ to you?" Is He only in your creed? or is He in your life as your life, as your personal Saviour, Lord, Guide, Friend, Helper as well? Other people's opinion may interest us, but on what Christ is to us personally our salvation depends.

Aug. 6.

RESISTING EVIL.

SOME of us meet injustice, wrong treatment, harshness, rudeness, unkindness, from those among whom we live and work. It is not easy

to keep our hearts sweet and loving all the while in such experiences. It is easier for us to do as the world does — harden ourselves against the injustice or rudeness, or grow bitter, resentful, soured. That is what too many do in the midst of the selfishness, harshness, and wrong they meet in their condition. But this is not the transforming that is toward Christ-likeness. The struggle between the good and the evil in us goes on continually; but when the world is getting the better of us, when the good in us is being smothered, when the lamp within our bosom is being quenched, when its flame is growing dimmer, we are losing in the struggle. Instead of being transformed, our life is being darkened.

Aug. 7.

REAL CONSECRATION.

CULTURE, in a consecrated life, is not to be sought for its own sake, but that we may thereby be made capable of doing more for the good or the joy of others. Each new lesson in life, each new accession to our knowledge, each new experience, is legitimately employed only when it is turned at once into some channel of personal helpfulness. One has the gift of music,—can sing or play well. The kind of consecration Christ wants of this gift is its use

to do good to others, to make them happier or better, to put songs into silent hearts and joys into sad hearts. Of all gifts, there is no one, perhaps, capable of a diviner ministry than is the gift of song.

Aug. 8.

BEARING AND FORBEARING.

NO Christian grace is likely to be called into play more frequently than that of mutual forbearance. Without it there can really exist no close and lasting friendly relations in a society composed of imperfect beings. Even the most tender intimacies and the holiest associations require the constant exercise of patience. If we resent every apparent injustice, demand the righting of every little wrong, and insist upon chafing and uttering our feelings at every infinitesimal grievance, and if all the other parties in the circle claim the same privilege, what miserable beings we shall all be, and how wretched life will become.

Aug. 9.

RAINBOWS IN THE CLOUDS.

THERE is no life of Christian discipline, however dark and full of cares and grief, into which God does not at some hour of each

day pour a little at least of the splendour of heaven. The trouble is that we shut our eyes to the comfort and will not look upon it. We see all the clouds and sit in the darkness, beholding not the sunbeams and the bits of rainbow that our Father sends into our lives to brighten and illumine them.

Aug. 10.

SEEING EYES.

MANY persons never see anything lovely in nature. They will stand amid the most picturesque landscapes, walk amid the rarest flowers, and witness the most gorgeous sunset splendour, without a thrill of pleasure or an expression of admiration. They have no sympathy with nature. There are many who will pass through a grand art gallery rich with paintings and statuary, and see nothing to seize their attention, while others will spend days in enthusiastic study of the works of art that are stored there. Some knowledge of art and an interest in it are necessary to the appreciation and enjoyment of paintings and statues. In like manner, he that would find the beautiful things in the Scriptures must have a mind and heart prepared for it. Hence the more of the divine life we have in our souls, the more will the sacred pages reveal to us. It is not so much

intellectual acumen and fine scholarship that we need, as spiritual culture, love for Christ, and the warmth of devotion.

Aug. 11.

NOT ENOUGH.

WE are good and kind to people—most of us. We comfort them in their sorrow. We help them in their trouble. We are courteous and gentle and neighbourly toward them. But we do not try to save their souls. We shall never do all the work of our "day," as Christians, until we learn to seek the salvation of every unsaved soul that God brings near to us. It is our duty to do good to others in all gentle and beautiful ways,—the work of the Lord includes the smallest courtesies and the simplest kindnesses. But saddest of all neglects is it to be polite and gracious to people in all neighbourly ways, and yet never seek to lead them to Christ to be saved.

Aug. 12.

A DEBT UNPAID.

WE owe other people more than their rights; we owe them love. To some of them it is not hard to pay this debt. They are lovable and winsome. They are thoroughly

respectable. They are congenial spirits, giving us in return quite as much as we can give them. It is natural to love them, and be very kindly and gentle to them. But we have no liberty of selection in this broad duty of loving other people. We may not choose whom we will love if we claim to be Christians. The Master's teaching is inexorable. "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? For sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

Aug. 13.

LINE UPON LINE.

LIFE is a building. It rises slowly, day by day, through the years. Every new lesson we learn lays another block on the edifice which is rising silently within us. Every experience, every touch of another life on ours, every influence that impresses us, every book we

read, every conversation we have, every act of our commonest days, adds something to the invisible building. Sorrow, too, has its place in preparing the stones to lie on the life-wall. All life furnishes the material.

Aug. 14.

HIS OWN TIME.

WHEN we pray long and with importunity for the lifting away of some heavy cross, or the lightening of some sore burden, and no answer comes, does the thought never arise in our minds that Jesus does not hear us, or that He does not come to us? But such complaint is never just. Sometimes He may seem not to care. The disciples had some lessons to learn. One was, how helpless they were in themselves in the world's danger. Another was, that Christ alone could deliver them. They could not learn these lessons save in the storm with the Master asleep. So there are similar lessons that we never can learn until Christ withholds His help for a time. And sometimes He hides Himself for a season just to teach us faith. But He is never indifferent to us. He never neglects nor forgets us. His heart ever wakes and watches, and at the right moment He comes and brings deliverance. We should learn to trust our Lord so confidently that in any hour

of danger we can nestle down in His bosom without fear or anxiety, and let Him take care of us.

Aug. 15.

OUR ROCK OF HOPE.

SON OF GOD tells of His divine nature and His eternal sonship. This is the name that gives security to all our hopes and trusts. If He were only a man, He might be very tender, loving, and kind, but could He do for us everything we need? Could a man make atonement for our sins? Could a man put his own life into our dead souls? Could a man fight our battles for us, and rescue us out of the hands of Satan? Could a man be with us in all the ways of toil, sorrow, need, and struggle? Could a man save us in death, and bear us through the dark mystery to glory? Could a man stand for us in the judgment? The divinity of Christ is the rock of our hope, and our salvation.

Aug. 16.

THE REFUGE OF PRAYER.

WE see the Master at prayer in Gethsemane. It was here that He prepared for His Cross. We should notice that His refuge in

His exceeding sorrow was prayer, and that, as the sorrow deepened the refuge still was prayer. "Being in an agony He prayed more earnestly." Prayer is the only refuge in sorrow. The lesson from the garden prayer is that we should take all the hard things, the anguishes, the insufferable pains, the bitter griefs of our lives, to God in prayer. We may be sure, too, that God will answer. If He does not relieve us of the suffering, He will strengthen us so that we can keep it, and still go on trusting and singing.

Aug. 17.

STARS IN THE DARKNESS.

ALL day the stars are in the sky. We cannot see them in the glare of the sunshine; but it is something, surely, to know that they are there, and that, when it grows dark, they will shine out. So, amid abounding human joy, it is a precious confidence to know that there are divine comforts veiled, invisible to our eyes in the sunshine about us, which will flash out the moment the earthly joy is darkened.

Aug. 18.

A BEAUTIFUL YEAR.

THE only way to have a year at its close stainless and beautiful is to keep the days, as they pass, all pure and lovely, with the

loveliness of holy, useful living. It is thus, in little days, that our years come to us, and we have but the one small fragment to fill and beautify at a time. The year is a book, and for each day one fair white page is opened before us; and we are artists, whose duty it is to put something beautiful on the page; or we are poets, and are to write some lovely thought, some radiant sentence, on each leaf as it lies open before us; or we are historians, and must give to the page some record of work or duty or victory to enshrine and carry away.

Aug. 19.

A GREAT GAIN.

NOTHING is lovelier in life than the spirit of contentment. Fretting mars the beauty of many a face. Discontent spoils all one's world. Out of whatever window he looks the discontented person sees something that is not pleasing. If there be a contented mind there is only good seen everywhere. The happiest homes in the world are not those in which are the finest carpets, the costliest pictures, the most luxurious furniture, but those in which glad, happy hearts dwell. A mind at rest glorifies the plainest surroundings and even the hardest conditions.

Aug. 20.

THE CROSS IN THE HEART.

MARTIN LUTHER'S seal was a rose: in the rose a heart; in the heart a Cross. The rose suggested fragrance and beauty. A Christian's life should be winning. It should be sweet, pouring forth the perfume of love. The heart in the rose told that all true life is love-inspired. Then at the centre of all was the Cross. That is the inspiration of it all. Until we have the Cross of Christ in us, in our very heart, we can have neither fragrance nor beauty.

Aug. 21.

PARTNERS WITH CHRIST.

WE are children of God. We have Christ's peace in our hearts. We walk beneath the smile of God. We have comfort in our sorrow, guidance in our perplexities, help in temptation, the assurance of eternal life. We should never forget that all these priceless blessings, which yet are so free to us, come to us through the Cross and passion of our Saviour. By His stripes we are healed. We have joy because He endured sorrow. We have peace in the midst of storm because He faced the storm. We have forgiveness because the darkness gathered about His soul

on the Cross. The hands that save us are pierced hands, pierced in saving us.

Aug. 22.

ALONE WITH GOD.

IN a certain sense all life is lonely. Even with sympathetic companionships all about us there is an inner life which each of us lives altogether alone. We must make our own choices and decisions. We must meet our own questions and answer them ourselves. We must fight our own battles, endure our own sorrows, carry our own burdens. Friendship may be very close and tender, but there is a sanctuary of each life into which even the holiest friendship may not enter. Blessed are they who in loneliness can say, "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." God's is the only friendship that can really meet all our soul's deep needs and cravings.

Aug. 23.

HEAVEN BEGINS HERE.

A GENTLE author has recently said: "We are too much in the habit of looking forward to heaven as something that *will be* an

easier, pleasanter story for us to read when we have finished this tiresome earth-narrative; a luxurious palace-chamber to rest in after this life's drudgery is ended; a remote celestial mountain-retreat, where the sound of the restless waves of humanity for ever fretting these shores will vex our ears no longer." We forget that heaven is not far off yonder—at least, our heaven is not—but begins right here in our common days, if it is ever to begin at all for us. Is not that what the prayer means—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?" "On earth"—in our shops and stores and schools; in our homes and social life; in our drudgery and care; in our times of temptation and sorrow.

Aug. 24.

GOD IN HIS CHILDREN.

GOD has so ordered that we cannot love and serve Him, and not also love and serve our fellow-men. Jesus made this very plain in His picture of the Last Judgment, when He said that He is hungry in every hungry little one of His; that He is sick in every least one of His who is sick; that in the stranger who comes to our door He stands before us, waiting for the hospitality of love. In serving His we are serving Him; in

neglecting His we neglect Him. We cannot fulfil our duty by loving Christ and serving Him, while we ignore our fellow-men. He accepts no such service. If we say we love Him, He points to the needy, the hungry, the sick, the burdened ones, the suffering all about us, and says: "Show your love to these. I do not need service now, but these need it. Serve them in My name."

Aug. 25.

A HEART'S RECORD.

ALL Christians love to read the Hebrew psalms. In every mood and phase of our heart's feelings we find in these psalms the very words in which to frame our thoughts and utter our desires. The reason is that these psalms are the faithful records of what other men thought and felt when they were in experiences like ours. We walk in the paths which their feet broke for us in the rough wilderness. The blessing we receive comes out of their pain and tears.

Aug. 26.

TRUST IN THE DARK.

WE know that all things work together for good to them that love God. It is made plain in the Scriptures that no tribulation

can harm us if we abide in Christ, that we shall be preserved blameless through the most terrible trials, if our faith in Christ does not fail. Many of life's events are full of mystery—we cannot understand them, nor can we see how they are consistent with God's love and wisdom. But we have the most positive assurance that some time we shall understand, and that in everything we shall see divine goodness.

Aug. 27.

A REFUGE FROM THE STORM.

ONE of the legends of the life of Jesus tells of a day when He was walking beside the sea, when suddenly a sea-bird, driven by a storm that had been sweeping on the farther shore, came fluttering towards Him, and, panting, fell on the sand at His feet and died. Then He took the bird and laid it in His hand, and breathed on it—when lo! the bird fluttered a moment and then flew aloft, its life restored. It is only a legend, and yet it was just in this gentle way that Jesus dealt always with human weakness and failure which fled to Him out of life's storms.

Aug. 28.

SOWING BLESSINGS.

ONE of the old legends tells of the visits of a goddess to ancient Thebes, and relates that the people always knew when she had been there, although no eye saw her, by the blessings she left behind. She would pause before a lightning-blackened tree, and the tree would be covered with beautiful vines. She would sit down to rest upon a decaying log, and the decay would be hidden under lovely moss. When she stepped on the muddy shores of the sea, violets would spring up in her tracks. This is only a legend, but it illustrates the influence of the beautiful life in which the fruits of the spirit have full and rich growth. There are lives so full of grace and goodness, that every influence they give forth is toward cheer and hope and purity.

Aug. 29.

ECHOES.

LIKE echoes are our lives; what they hear they reflect back to the speaker's ear and heart. So it is that we may find out, in the way others treat us, just how we really treat them. They echo into our ears in their judgments of us the very things which our lips have spoken concerning them. Hence our judgments

of others are really self-revealings. If we are suspicious and distrustful of men, we are showing the world that in us are causes for suspicion and distrust. If we find selfishness wherever we go, it is an evidence that we are selfish ourselves.

Aug. 30.

GOING FORTH WEEPING.

GREAT thoughts, wherever we find them, have been born in struggle and anguish. So it is in all life. We cannot be of use in the world without cost. What it costs us nothing to give or to do is not worth the giving or the doing. It is those who sow in tears who reap in joy. It is he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, that shall come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Aug. 31.

READY FOR HIS COMING.

CHRIST will come as a thief in the night. This means that His coming will be most unexpected. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven." Since the time of Christ's coming cannot be

known in advance, the simple duty of the Christian is to be always ready. For one thing, this is to be at peace with God. One who is not saved is not yet ready for that coming. In a sense death is the coming of Christ to men, for it ushers them into the presence of God. No one is prepared for death who has not accepted Christ for his Saviour. What can be more awful than the sudden coming of death to one who is not forgiven and is thus unprepared to meet his God. The way to be ready for Christ's coming is not to sit down in idleness and wait and watch for His appearance in the clouds, but to keep at one's work with diligence.

SEPTEMBER

I lie where I have always lain,
God smiles as He has always smiled;
Ere suns and moons could wax and wane
Ere stars were thundergirt, or piled
The heavens, God thought on me His child;
Ordained a life for me, arrayed
Its circumstances every one
To the minutest.

Robert Browning.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 1.

PAIN AND PRAISE.

PAUL and Silas were in prison. Their sufferings were so great that they could not sleep, and they sought to forget their pain in praying and praising. Most people are in the song mood only when their circumstances are pleasant. But here were men singing in the midst of great pain and trouble. What was the secret? It was their faith in God. The peace of God was in their hearts. They knew that all things were working together for their good. Christ was with them in their dungeon, and instead of being cast down they rejoiced.

We should learn to rejoice in our troubles. If we are true Christians, there can come to us no experience, however sore, that ought to stop our rejoicing. There is, even in the sorest trouble, some cause for joy. We may not be able to see it, but here is where faith should come in. We know that our Father's hand is in every pain or trial, and we know that whatever He sends or allows must be a blessing.

Sept. 2.

THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

ALWAYS and everywhere Christ is the door. The way to peace with God is through our Lord Jesus; and access into the grace of salvation is also through Him. To reject Christ is to reject everything of blessing and good. To receive Christ is to be admitted to all the privileges and benefits of redemption.

This "access" is into all "grace." Grace is favour undeserved. What we earn by our own deeds is not grace; it is wages. What comes to us as mercy, through the love of God, is grace. "Access"—to what? To all the blessings that belong to God's children. "All things are yours," says St. Paul, "and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." There is the privilege of prayer—we have access to that. There is the Bible—that is ours. There is the Church—that is for us. There is grace for life, comfort for sorrow, all divine fulness—we have access into that. There is heaven at the last—the door is open for us to enter in and to go out no more for ever.

Sept. 3.

THE DANGER OF WEALTH.

FEW people think of the danger of getting rich. Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit priest, said that among all the thousands of men who had come to him with confession of sin, not one had ever confessed the sin of covetousness.

Men think they become great just in proportion as they gather wealth. Yet there never was a more fatal error. A man is really measured by what he is, not by what he has. We may find a shrivelled soul in the midst of a great fortune, and a noble soul in the barest poverty. A man's real "life" is what would be left of him if everything he has were stripped off. It is his character as it appears in God's sight. So we will make a great mistake if we set out in life merely to gather this world's things about us.

Sept. 4.

ERE THE NIGHT COMETH.

A DAY is a short time. Whatever we do we must do before the sun sets, before night comes. That is, we must do our work while we live. Opportunities do not bide our leisure, and when past can never be recalled.

We must do the kindness while our friend is in need, for to-morrow will be too late.

Sept. 5.

LOVE THAT HINDERS.

ONE of the dangers of friendship is that we try to keep our loved ones back from hard duties or great sacrifices to which God is calling them. We act Satan's part when we permit ourselves to do this.

Think what the world would have missed if Jesus had been kept back by tender human love from His Cross. We should never meddle with God's plans, nor try to hinder our friends from taking God's way.

Sept. 6.

FAITHFUL IN LITTLE.

TOO many people are not faithful in little things. They are not to be absolutely depended upon. They do not always keep their promises. They break engagements. They fail to pay their debts promptly. They come behind time to appointments. They are neglectful and careless in little things. In general they are good people, but their life is honeycombed with small failures. One who

can be positively depended upon, who is faithful in the least things as well as in the greatest, whose life and character are true through and through, gives out a light in this world which honours Christ and blesses others. Says George MacDonald: "To know one person who is absolutely to be trusted will do more for a man's moral nature, yes, and even his spiritual nature, than all the sermons he ever heard or can hear."

Sept. 7.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

GOOD in the heart works it sway up into the face and prints its own beauty there. Love in the life softens the features and gives them a warmth like the gentle beauty of spring flowers. Peace in the heart soon gives a quiet calm to the countenance. Many a perturbed, restless face grows placid and reposeful under the influence of inner peace. Purity in the soul shows itself in the upward look and the thoughtful reverence which tells of communion with God. Benevolence writes its autograph on brow and cheek. Thus, in a sense, even the physical features share in the transfiguration of the life of faith and holiness.

Sept. 8.

JOY AS A MEDICINE.

TRUE and rational amusements are a great force in educating and building character. All pure joy is helpful. All pure art leaves its touch of beauty. Pure music sings itself into our hearts, and becomes thenceforward and for ever a new element of power in our life. Laughter makes life sunnier. It sweeps the clouds from the sky, shakes off many a care, smooths out many a wrinkle, and dries many a tear. Pure pleasure sweetens many a bitter heart-fountain, drives away many a gloomy thought and many a hobgoblin shape of imagined terror, and saves many a darkened spirit from despair.

Sept. 9.

SOUNDING TRUMPETS.

WE are commanded not to seek the praise of men—not to do good deeds to be seen of men or to receive reward of them. We are not to sound trumpets or announce our righteous acts from the housetop. Translated into the phrase of daily life, these injunctions would seem to mean that we are not to seek to have all our benevolent acts published in the newspapers. They would seem to mean that we should not desire publicity and human praise

for every generous thing we do, every sacrifice we make, and every kindness we show. They seem, indeed, to imply that we should even take pains not to have our good deeds made known at all—that we should seek to perform them so silently and secretly that the world may never hear any report of them. When the motive is to receive praise of men or to exhibit our goodness, the act loses its beauty in God's sight.

Sept. 10.

EARTH'S FAILURES.

IT may be that those who have failed here, as men phrase it, are the very ones who shall win the highest success in the after-life, if they have kept their garments clean amid the struggles and toils. It has been said that heaven is probably a place for those who have failed on earth. Certainly, for the Christian, the realisation of the truth of immortality takes away the bitterness of earthly defeat. There will be time enough for victory and for the most glorious success in the unending eternity.

Sept. 11.

READY FOR LOVE'S CALL.

NATURALLY we care for ourselves and for our own benefit and comfort. We do not incline to put ourselves out, to sacrifice

our own convenience, to serve others. We might do it for one we love deeply, but the gospel requires us to love and serve, with all our capacity for serving, those who are not among our congenial friends. An enemy who needs us we must serve. Even the most debased human life that we find in our path we must touch with our healing love and help with the hands that have been given to Christ. We are required to hold our life and all that we have at the call of love and of human need. We are to bear one another's burdens. We are to have sympathy with all sorrow and need, to be touched even with a sense of the world's condition. This law of Christian love puts us down among men just as Christ Himself was among men. He kept nothing back. He never thought a thought nor breathed a breath for Himself. He poured out the blessings of His sweet life without stint on everyone who came near Him, at last giving His very blood for the saving of man.

Sept. 12.

INFLUENCE LIFE'S AROMA.

THERE is something very mysterious about perfume. No one can describe it. You cannot take a photograph of it. You cannot weigh it. Yet it is a very essential quality of

the flower. The same is true of that strange thing we call influence. Influence is the aroma of a life. The most important thing about your life is this subtle, imponderable, indefinable, mysterious quality of your personality which is known as influence. This is really all of you that counts in its final impression upon other lives. No matter how a man may pose, how much he may profess, how he may assert himself—what kind of man he may claim to be—that which he really is, is what breathes out from his life wherever he is known, that which his name suggests to people whenever it is spoken.

Sept. 13.

THE FORMING TIME.

IN the bright sunny days the young should gather into their life stores of moral and spiritual strength from which to draw when they go forth to encounter the world's fierce temptations. Memory should be filled with the words of God. The great essential principles of Christianity should be so fixed in their minds that no assaults of scepticism can make them doubt. The fundamental laws of morality should be settled in their very soul as the laws of their own life. Their spiritual habits should be so firmly fixed that they will carry their

religion with them out into the world as they carry their face or their throbbing heart. Into the ship of their life, their character, they should pile massive strength which nothing can possibly overcome.

Sept. 14.

THE REAL HEAVEN.

PERHAPS our thought of the heavenly blessedness is often a selfish one, that it will be all enjoyment, all receiving. But even heaven will not be an eternity of self-gratification, of the bliss of receiving. Even there, especially there, where all imperfections will be left behind, love must find its supreme blessedness in giving, in serving others, in pouring out into other lives. It will for ever there be more blessed to give than to receive, to minister rather than to be ministered unto.

Sept. 15.

READINESS FOR CHRIST.

WHAT Christ wants us to do is so to live at all times that His coming at any moment of the day or night will not find us unready. We should keep our work faithfully

done, day by day, leaving nothing unfinished any evening; for before morning He may come. We should live at peace with all men, never allowing the sun to go down on our wrath or on any enmity or bitterness; for before another day dawns He may come, and we would not want Him to come and find us in strife and bitterness. We should be careful what we do any hour; for He may come suddenly and find us in sin. We should watch where we go, lest His coming may surprise us in some place where we would not want Him to find us.

Sept. 16.

KEEPING CHARACTER SWEET.

WE need to watch our lives in the smallest matters if we would keep our names sweet wherever we are known. Influence is most important. It is our mightiest force for good or for evil. Let us keep it pure and good for Christ, and in order to do this let us keep Christ always in it.

Sept. 17.

GOD'S WAYS WITH US.

THE way of God which He would make us know is always the way of His will. The one business of life is to learn to do that

will. We say it lightly in our prayers, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." If our prayer is answered our whole life will be drawn into the divine way. What effect, for example, will God's way have on our grudges, our unbrotherly feelings, our jealousies, our resentments, our selfishness? They must all come into tune with the law of love. So in all life. The way on which God guides us is a way of holiness. It is an ever-ascending way, for its terminal is heaven. It is a prayer, therefore, that we must make continually. We must always keep climbing upward. No matter how good you are to-day, you should be somewhat better to-morrow.

Sept. 18.

HELP IN TIME OF NEED.

EVERY Christian who has lived many years, and passed through trials and struggles, knows how texts with which he has been familiar from childhood, but in which he has never before found any special help, all at once, in some new experience of need or trial, flash out, like newly lighted lamps, and pour bright beams upon his path. The light was not new; it had shone there all the while; but he could not see it until now, because other lights were shining about him, obscuring this one.

Sept. 19.

TRUE GIVING.

SYMPATHY is better than money: so is courage, so is cheer, so is hope. It is better always to give ourselves than to give our money; certainly, we should give ourselves with whatever else we may give. "The gift without the giver is bare." Christ Himself gave no money; but every life that came near to Him in faith went away enriched and helped. He gave love, and love is the brightest and richest coin minted in this world. And all of us can give love; none are too poor for that.

Sept. 20.

"NEVERTHELESS, NOT MY WILL."

THE true prayer in time of great trial, care, or sorrow is, not that we shall be delivered from the experiences, but that we may pass through them unharmed. It is right for us to pray to be kept from evil, but there is only one evil. It is not sickness, it is not poverty, it is not human wrong and cruelty, it is not earthly loss — the only evil is sin. Nothing else can harm us. One rebellious thought will hurt us more than all the martyrs' fires we could suffer, or the longest and most dreadful agonies of pain we could endure.

Sept. 21.

SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

SAINT PAUL has given us an infallible direction for the best spiritual culture. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Then he adds, "These things do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

Sept. 22.

SILENT FORCES.

IT is in the calm, quiet life that the truest strength is found. The power that is blessing the world these days comes from the purity, sweetness, and self-denial of gentle mother-love, from the voiceless influence of example in faithful fathers, from the patience and unselfishness of devoted sisters, from the tender beauty of innocent child-life in homes; above all, from the silent cross and the Divine Spirit's breathings of gentle stillness. The agencies that are doing the most to bless the world are the noiseless ones. Moral power seems to hide itself in silent ministries, and to shun those that advertise themselves.

Sept. 23.

CLEAN VESSELS.

THE life must be holy that Christ will employ. The vessel must be clean that the king will use. The heart must be broken through which God's love may flow. Someone gives a consecration prayer: "Lord, take me, break me, make me," and tells the story of a golden cup which had been made out of old gold coins. These had lost the image and superscription originally upon them, and were then thrown into a melting-pot and wrought into a beautiful cup. So ofttimes a human life has lost its beauty; and then the Master takes it, breaks it, and makes it over again in form of beauty. Then the King will use it.

Sept. 24.

SERVICE AND RESULT.

IF we are doing true work we need not concern ourselves about visible results. Though in self-denying life we build no palaces on earth, we are piling far nobler walls beyond the skies. The money we give in service and sacrifice of helpfulness may add nothing to our bank account, but it is laid up as treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

Sept. 25.

UPLIFTING OTHER LIVES.

WHEN God sends to us a friend or a new acquaintance—someone who is brought thus into the range of our influence, he has a purpose in so doing. He wants us to be a blessing to the person. He wants us to speak wholesome words, to give wise counsel, and to exert an uplifting influence, leaving impressions upon the life which shall add to its beauty and blessing. But suppose that we fail in this, and that instead we give wrong touches to the life, drop the wrong seeds, exert an unwholesome influence, leave sinister impressions, what must our accounting be when we stand before God?

Sept. 26.

MISLEADING VOICES.

THERE is, in the midst of earthly ease, continual danger that we give way to the spirit of self-indulgence. Too many of our friends are ready to make Peter's mistake when we stand before duties which demand self-denial or sacrifice, saying to us, "This shall never be unto you!" They insist that we are not really called to such costly service, and they would dissuade us from it. But such voices

are not the Good Shepherd's—they are for the time the voices of strangers. We should know them by their earthly tone. That is not the way Christ speaks to us. He would never have us withhold ourselves from any service because of its cost.

Sept. 27.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

IT would be easy to fill pages with the names of individuals who have gone down in defeat, but who in their very failure have started influences which have enriched the world. In the centre of this great host is Jesus Christ. The story of His blessed life is a story of failure and defeat according to the world's estimate. But did the Cross leave a blot on His name? Is it not the very glory of His life that He died thus in the darkness that day? Was His career a failure? Christianity is the answer. He is the Captain also and Leader of a great host who like Him have been defeated and have failed, but have made the world richer by their sacrifice. Let no one speak of such defeats as blots on fair names; rather they are adornings of glory. In all such failure there is divine beauty.

Sept. 28.

LOOK TOWARDS THE LIGHT.

THERE is never any real need for growing discouraged. No matter what the condition may be, we may trust God with the outcome, while we accept our lot with cheerfulness, and do the duty that comes to our hand. There are many things we never can learn in the midst of our earthly ambitions, which must be learned, if ever, as song-birds learn new songs, in darkened rooms. A Christian's rule of life should be, never to yield to discouragement, never to faint in any trouble, but always to keep his face toward the light and his heart full of song.

Sept. 29.

THE TRUE WAY TO LIVE.

THE only true way to live is one day at a time. This means that we should give all our strength to the work of the present day, that we should finish each day's tasks by nightfall, leaving nothing undone at setting of the sun that we ought to have done that day. Then, when a new morning dawns, we should accept its duties, the bit of God's will it unrolls for us, and do everything well that is given us to do. We may be assured, too, that there is something for each moment, and that if we waste any portion of our day we shall not make it complete.

Sept. 30.

CHRIST IN THE SHADOWS.

WE stand ofttimes in the deep shadows of grief, longing for comfort, yearning for love, while Christ is close beside us, closer than any human friend can be. If only we will dry our tears and look up into His face, believing, our soul shall be flooded with His wonderful love, and our sorrow shall be swallowed up in fulness of joy. There is never the least doubt about the presence of Christ in our times of trouble; it is only because we remain unaware of that presence that we are not comforted.

OCTOBER

For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear . . .
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love—
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.

Robert Browning.

OCTOBER

Oct. 1.

MAKING THE DESERT BLOOM.

IT is a beautiful thing to plant a flower which may grow and be the beginning of a lovely garden which shall brighten one little spot in the desert. That is worth while. It is worth while to put a bit of beauty into a dreary spot to brighten it. It is worth while to plant a few flowers where no flowers had bloomed before. It is a beautiful thing to change a spot of desert into a garden. It is still more worth while to get love into a heart in which only selfishness and hate dwelt before. It is best of all to get Christ admitted where He has not been received before. That is the truest and best ministry.

Oct. 2

NEW LIGHT ON SORROW.

EARTHLY life is full of pain and sorrow. God had one Son without sin; He has none without suffering, for Christ was the prince

of sufferers. The world regards adversity and sorrow of every kind as misfortune. It would never call a man blessed or happy whose life is full of trial and tears. But the gospel turns a new light, the light from heaven, upon earthly life, and in this wonderful light affliction and sorrow appear beautiful.

Oct. 3.

WORKING AND WAITING.

WE have need of patience. We should learn to wait as well as labour, to listen as well as speak, to rest as well as toil. There are moments and hours in life when the supreme duty is to do nothing, to stand quiet and patient, waiting trustfully for God to work, or for the time to come when we can act. Immeasurable harm has been done ofttimes by impatience which could not stand and wait.

Oct. 4.

NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITIES.

IN our Lord's description of the judgment, those on the left hand are condemned not for evil things which they had done, but for their neglect of love's duties. "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat. I was

thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not." They had not oppressed the poor, they had not robbed men, they had not gone about wounding others. Nothing whatever is said of their sins, saving that they had not done the deeds of love to those who needed such ministries. They had left undone things which they ought to have done.

Oct. 5.

THE IMPULSE OF SERVICE.

PAUL, like his Master, "went about doing good." He never stopped to rest. When his work was done in one place he was instantly off to another. When one door was closed he sought another that was open. No opposition checked him. No persecution daunted him. He is thus a model for all Christ's followers.

But we must get his motive before we can have his career. There is no use in our trying to imitate his zeal unless we can first get his spirit. Here are two locomotive engines. They are precisely alike, but one of them rolls over the rails at fifty miles an hour, drawing its immense train, while the other stands quiet and motionless in the round house. The difference is, that the one has a heart of fire, which gives

it power, while the heart of the other is cold. It was a heart of fire that made Paul the great missionary he was. There are plenty of people of the other kind in the churches, wanting only the fire to make them mighty workers for Christ.

Oct. 6.

HE HOLDS THE KEY.

HE can open the doors of death's prison-houses when He will, and bring up the bodies of His people that are yet under death's power. This ought to be a comfort to us. It seems hard to put the bodies of our dead away in the grave, and have them shut up there. But they will not always stay in the gloom. Christ Himself lay in the grave, and then arose and burst open the door and came forth. In like manner, at the right time, He will call up all those who sleep in Him.

Another thought suggested by Christ with the keys of death in His hand is, that He is the Guide of His people in their lonely walk through the valley of death. He knows the way by experience, and is thus prepared to conduct them through it. This ought to be a great comfort to us as we think of dying. We are sure of the presence with us of this experienced and faithful Guide, and no harm can touch us.

Oct. 7.

THE STRENGTH OF MEEKNESS.

CHRISTIAN meekness is not put down among the world's beatitudes. It requires a great deal more strength and heroism to be forgiving, to stand patient under insult, than it does to get angry and strike. Hence the manliest man is not he who flies into a temper, who resents every injury, demanding satisfaction, but the man who receives the wrong and stands silent under the insult, leaving in God's hands the righting of his wrongs. A Spanish writer says: "To return evil for good is devilish; to return good for good is human; but to return good for evil is Godlike."

Oct. 8.

GOD'S DAILY DEALINGS.

RECKONING with God will be a very serious matter. We are told that the books will be opened—the books which record men's acts, motives, dispositions, tempers. But we do not have to wait until the Judgment Day to have these reckonings; God reckons with us as we go along. He is continually calling men to give account to Him. Sometimes it is by the preaching of the Word, which convicts them of sin and makes them stand trembling before the bar of conscience. Sometimes it is by an

affliction or a trial which compels them to stop and think of their relation to God. Sometimes it is by a deep searching of heart produced by the silent inner working of the Holy Spirit. There is no man who, some time or other in this present life, is not called up before God for a reckoning.

Oct. 9.

CHRIST LOVES INDIVIDUALS.

DOES God know me among the millions of His angels? Does He ever fix His thought on me as an individual? Does He have a distinct and personal affection for me like that of a mother for her child? Does Christ, the Good Shepherd, give care and thought to each particular sheep, so that He knows each one's present condition and circumstances? Does He know when one of His is in trouble, is sick or suffering, when one has been hurt in some way, or when one is in danger? Does He know when one strays from the safe enclosure of the fold and wanders off into peril?

The answer to all these questions is the same. Every individual has his own place in the heart of Christ.

St. Paul put this truth most strikingly in a sentence when he said of Christ: "He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Oct. 10.

UNDESERVED LOVE.

WE all know that love is a transfiguring quality. But what is the love that is a fruit of the Spirit? Love for lovely or loveable people? Yes; but love for all sorts and conditions of people as well. Some of the most selfish and disagreeable people you ever saw had an intense love for a few particular individuals. Anybody can love those who are kind, sweet, spirited, and unselfish. "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them." The love which the Holy Spirit kindles is love for unlovely people as well as lovely, love for those who are not gentle and kindly, love for enemies. It is a love that is stirred by human need, wherever it appears, and that rests not in mere sentiment, but reaches out its hand to help and bless.

Oct. 11.

HAPPINESS IN SELF-DENIAL.

WE must live a useful life. Nothing good ever comes out of idleness or out of selfishness. The standing water stagnates and breeds decay and death. It is the running stream that keeps pure and sweet. The fruit of an idle life is never joy and peace. Years lived

selfishly never become garden-spots in the field of memory. Happiness comes out of self-denial for the good of others. Sweet always are the memories of good deeds done and sacrifices made. Their incense, like heavenly perfume, comes floating up from the fields of toil and fills old age with holy fragrance. When one has lived to bless others; one has many grateful, loving friends whose affection proves a wondrous source of joy when the days of feebleness come. Bread cast upon the waters is found again after many days.

Oct. 12.

A PRIVILEGE OF FRIENDSHIP.

THE joy of being trusted is one of the holiest experiences that can come to any human heart. We do not understand the sweetest privilege of friendship until in some hour of need or weakness or sorrow our friend trusts us absolutely, leans upon us, as it were puts his very life into our hand. The opposite of this is the pain of not being trusted. It may not be through any lack of love, or lack of confidence in our character or strength, but only through fear; yet the failure of a friend to trust us, whatever the cause, hurts our heart.

Oct. 13.

WHAT CHRISTIANITY REQUIRES.

A CHRISTIAN man must be strong as well as tender. His word must be pure as gold. His lightest promises must be as sacredly kept as his most solemn engagements. He must be a large-hearted, generous man, unselfish, noble spirited, above all suspicion of meanness. He must be scrupulously exact in all his dealings, promptly returning what he has borrowed, paying his debts the very day they are due, never seeking to evade them, never forgetting them, nor postponing payment till the very latest time. He must not be a hard man, close, oppressive, domineering, despotic. In a word, he must combine unflinching integrity, unvarying promptness and punctuality, and conscientious truthfulness with generosity and liberality.

Oct. 14.

DOING THE NEXT THING.

WE are not to wait for opportunities to do great things—not to keep watching for some splendid thing which by its conspicuous importance may win for us the applause of men—but are to do always, moment by moment, the thing that comes to our hand. It may be to speak a cheering word to one who is disheartened, to join in a child's play, to mend a

broken toy, to send a few flowers made more fragrant by your love into a sick-room, or to write a letter of condolence or sympathy. It is the thing, small or great, which our hand finds at the moment to do.

Oct. 15.

IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE DEEDS.

SAYS Faber: "When men do anything for God—the very least thing—they never know where it will end, nor what amount of good it will do for Him. Love's secret, therefore, is to be always doing things for God, and not to mind because they are very little things." Carlyle says: "Oh, it is great, and there is no other greatness, to make some work of God's creation more fruitful, better, more worthy of good; to make some human heart a little wiser, manfuler, happier, more blessed, less accursed." And we never know how a little thing of ours may bless a life and stay in it as a benediction for ever.

Oct. 16.

HAPPY IGNORANCE.

WE cannot bear now the revealing of our own future. Christ knows it all. When a young Christian comes to His feet and

says, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou leadest," the Master knows what that promise means. But He does not reveal the knowledge to this happy disciple. People sometimes say they wish they could look on into the years and see all that will come to them. But would this be a blessing? Would it make them happier? Could they shape their course better if they knew all that shall befall them—the struggles, the victories, the defeats, the joys and sorrows, the failures of bright hopes, just how long they will live?

Oct. 17.

BEAUTY OF SOUL.

THERE is a spiritual light which makes the plainest face radiant and the homeliest features lovely. There is a beauty of soul which shines like a star in this world of sin. It is for this beauty that we are taught to pray. "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." It is not the beauty which fades when sickness smites the body, or which is lost in the withering touch of years, or which blanches when death's pallor overspreads the features, but the beauty which grows lovelier in pain or suffering, which shines out in sorrow like a star in the night, which transfigures the wrinkled and faded features of old age, and which bursts out in death into the full likeness of Christ.

Oct. 18.

CHRIST WATCHING US.

CHRIST looks down upon our struggles in this world. He sees us toiling; all our battles and strifes He beholds. He sees us in the waves and in the storm. He sees us, not with the eye of the calm spectator merely, but with the eyes of tenderest love. This is a great thought; if we can only get it into our hearts, it will give us wondrous courage in the hour of toil, sorrow, or struggle. Jesus knows when the battle is hard, when the night is dark, when the temptation is more than we can bear.

Oct. 19.

DRIVEN HOME.

MANY of those who went to Christ in the olden days were driven by their distress of heart. They tried everything else first, and then at the last moment they hurried to Jesus. The same is true in these days. Many persons who have never prayed before have gotten down upon their knees by the bedside of their sick and dying children and cried to God on their behalf. Many persons have first been sent to God by their own troubles. It was not until the prodigal was in sore want, and every other resource had been exhausted, that he said he

would arise and go to his father. Many sinners never think of Christ until they are in despair under the sense of guilt. Not until they see the storm of wrath gathering do they seek the shelter of the Cross. But what a comfort it is that even going so late to the Saviour He does not reject or cast away those who come.

Oct. 20.

UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE.

WE have only one thing to do—to obey Christ. In whatever way His will is made known to us, whether in His Word, through our own consciences, or in His providences, we have but to accept it and do it. It may mean the setting aside of cherished plans, the giving up of things that are dearest to us, a life of pain and suffering, but in any case it is ours to obey without question.

Oct. 21.

EXPERIENCE TEACHES.

OFTENTIMES we learn to know our human friends by trusting them. We see no special beauty or worth in them as they move by our side in the ordinary experiences of life; but we pass at length into circumstances of trial, where we need friendship, and then

the noble qualities of our friends appear, as we trust them, and they come nearer to us, and prove themselves true. In like manner most of us really get acquainted with Christ only in experience of need, in which His love and faithfulness are revealed.

Oct. 22.

"CHOOSE THOU MY LOT."

PEOPLE sometimes chafe because in their circumstances they cannot do any great things; as if nothing could be really a divine mission unless it is something conspicuous. Organising missionary meetings, speaking at conventions, attending Dorcas societies, writing books, painting pictures — these are all fine things when they are the things God gives; but if the mother neglects her children to do any of these, she has simply put out of her hands the largest things to take up those that are exceedingly small. In other words, that which the Master gives anyone to do is always the grandest work he can find.

Oct. 23.

VALUE OF REPENTED SINS.

I HAVE seen it stated that the oyster mends its shell with a pearl. Where the ugly wound was, there comes, with the healing, not

a scar, but a pearl. The same is true in human souls when divine grace heals the wounds of sins. Sins that we truly repent of become pearls in the character. It is the experience of all who grow into Christ-like nobleness, that many of the golden lines of their later lives have been wrought out through their regrets and their repentings of wrong-doings. Some-one says, "The besetting sin may become the guardian angel."

Oct. 24.

FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS.

"WHOSOEVER shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two." The principle applies to everything in life. A good many people want to go only one mile in consecration, in praying, in loving others, in doing God's will. But mere one-mile following of Christ is pitifully inadequate. What kind of a friend do you like—one who will go just the easy one mile with you, while the path is flowery and the air full of sweet odours, and then drop off when the road gets steep and rough, and the winter winds begin to blow? Or do you like the friend who stays by you when it costs to be your friend, when he has to carry burdens for you, has almost to carry you sometimes? Do you like best the friend who

goes only one short, easy mile with you and then drops off, or the friend who goes the second mile?

Oct. 25.

UNDER CHRIST'S EYE.

NO burden would seem heavy if we bore it in Christ's Name and for Him. No cross would be too hard to carry if this Name were written on it. No work would seem hard if we were doing it consciously for our Master. If we remembered Him and saw His eyes of love looking down upon us continually, we could not let the hateful mood stay in our hearts, we could not do the mean or wicked thing, we could not say the bitter, cutting word, we could not, by our wretched jealousy, hurt the gentle heart that never had given us anything but love.

Oct. 26.

GOD'S MESSENGERS.

FAR more than we understand does God strengthen and bless us through human love. He hides Himself in the lives of those who touch us with their affection. He looks into our eyes through human eyes, and speaks

into our ears through human lips. He gives power to us in our faintness, and hope in our discouragement, through the friends who come to us with their love and cheer. The highest and greatest of all the comings of God to men was in a human life, when the Son of God tabernacled in the flesh. So, ever since, God is coming to us in human lives; yet often we do not recognise the love and the help as from Him, because we see no glory blazing in the faces of the messengers.

Oct. 27.

HEAVEN'S RE-UNIONS.

A LARGE part of the blessed hope of heaven is its re-unions. The Bible gives us many glimpses of the glory and beauty of the home that awaits us. We are told of streets of gold, of gates of pearl, of a river of the water of life, of a crystal sea—all that earth can find of splendour is brought into the picture to heighten our conception of the glories of heaven. But that which makes heaven dear to those who have loved ones there is not so much the promise of all this splendour of beauty, as the hope of again getting with the dear friends who are in the midst of all this incomparable beauty.

Oct. 28.

OUR HIDDEN HEAVEN.

WE live in our narrow sphere in this world, treading round and round in the same little circle. Life's toils and tasks so fill our hands that we scarcely have time for a thought of anything else. Its secularities and its struggles for bread keep us ever bent down to the earth. The tears of sorrow dim our vision of God and of heaven. The dust and smoke of earth's battles hide the blue of the heaven. We need continually to get far looks to rest us, and to keep us in mind of the great world that stretches away beyond our close horizons. The glimpses of eternity which flash upon us as we read our Bible or look into Christ's face tell us anew what we so easily forget, that we are immortal, that our life really has no horizon.

Oct. 29.

TWO WAYS OF HELPING.

IF you have a friend carrying a heavy load, there are two ways in which you may help him—you may take part of his burden and carry it for him, or you may put into his heart cheer and courage, making him stronger, so that he can bear his burden gladly himself. The latter way of helping is quite as effective as the former, and ofttimes it is a great deal wiser.

Oct. 30.

PRACTISING GOD'S WILL.

KNOWING that we should love our enemies is not the ultimate thing—actually loving our enemies is. Knowing that we should be patient is not all—we are to practise the lesson of patience until it has become a habit in our life. Knowing that we should always submit our will to God's is to have a clear mental conception of our duty in this regard; but this is not religion. There are many who know well this cardinal duty of Christian life who yet continue to chafe whenever they cannot have their own way, and who struggle and resist and refuse to submit to the divine will whenever it appears to be opposed to their own will. They know their lesson, but they have not learned to live it. It is living it, however, that is religion.

Oct. 31.

WHAT IS WORTH WHILE.

OVER the doorway of the Cathedral of Milan is the inscription: "Only the eternal is important." There are a great many things it is not worth our while to do. Some of us spend our days in poor trivialities which bless no one, and which will add no lustre to our crown. "Only the eternal is important."

Therefore, "Walk while ye have the light, that the darkness overtake you not." Waste no opportunity. Despise no privilege. Squander no moment. There is just time enough in God's plan for you to live your life well if you spend every moment of it in earnest, faithful duty. One hour lost will leave a flaw. A life thus lived in unbroken diligence and faithfulness will have no regrets when the end comes. Its work will be completed. It will not be night that then overtakes it in the mystery which men call death, but day rather, the morning of eternity.

NOVEMBER

My God, my God, let me for once look on Thee
As though naught else existed, we alone!
And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark
Expands till I can say, even from myself—
I need Thee, and I feel Thee, and I love Thee.

Browning.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 2

SAY NOT "TO-MORROW."

THIS is a well-trodden highway, and there are always thousands upon it. They believe everything, and are terrified when they think of the awful facts of eternity. They mean to turn and be saved, but they put it off. There will be a more convenient season by and by. It is a terribly mistaken way to do. The best time to repent and be saved is always now. A more convenient season will never come. Countless thousands have been lost by saying "To-morrow" when they should have said "To-day."

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death."

Nov. 2.

OUR PART.

WHEN God laid the sins of men on Jesus, and when Jesus had made expiation for them, the law was satisfied. No one can say that God is not just, since Christ died for man's sins. Yet there is something for us to do. The Gospel is not a universal emancipation proclamation. In one sense it is. Emancipation is offered to all. But there must be an individual acceptance of it on the part of each sinner who would receive its blessing. This is faith. It is faith in Jesus that is required, not merely believing in God's mercy, but receiving Christ as the Saviour, and resting upon Him alone for salvation. This implies a great deal. If we take Christ as our Saviour we take Him also as our Master. That means that we forsake our sins; that we devote ourselves to Him, and follow Him with love and obedience.

Nov. 3.

AS IN HEAVEN.

THIS is the lesson set for us—the doing of God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, as we ourselves shall do it in heaven when we reach that happy home. If our heart is full of love for Christ, the doing of the will of God

will always be sweet, even though it be against Nature and at the cost of much self-denial. It has been said very truly: "The outside world takes all its colour, value, and grace from the kind of world one carries about in one's self. Heaven in us will make the hardest tasks a delight."

Nov. 4.

THE REAL SABBATH.

JESUS stripped the Sabbath of the disfigurements which human hands had left upon it, and set it forth in its beauty as when God gave it to man. He did not abolish the day nor lower its sacredness by a hair's-breadth—He made it all the more sacred. A picture of Dante by Giotto was lost to the world of art for a long while. A researcher of art, however, thought that at last he had found it on a wall, hidden under coats of whitewash or plaster. With great care he removed the coverings, until the face of the Italian poet was revealed in all its sadness and strength. The real Sabbath which God made was lost to the world, covered up, plastered over with man's interpretations and inventions, in Jesus' day, and He took away these obscuring and defacing teachings of men, showing the world the Sabbath as God meant it to be and as He would have it observed.

Nov. 5.

VIA DOLOROSA.

WE never can go after Christ and walk on flowery paths. It was a Via Dolorosa on which He walked to Calvary, and the disciples must be as their Lord. Notice that it is "His Cross" which each follower of Christ must take up. That is, each life has its own burden of duty, of struggle, of self-denial, of responsibility, which each must take up and carry for himself.

The whole world would be of no profit to us if our life were lost. We could not buy pardon, or peace, or heaven even with the treasures of the whole world in our hand. Nor could we keep the world and carry it with us into the other life, though we won it all.

Nov. 6.

NOT OF THIS WORLD.

IF we are Christians we are not of this world. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are foreigners here. It is our duty to live the heavenly life in the midst of this earth's circumstances and conditions. We are here for our Master, to do His work, to reveal Him to men, to do in our little measure the things He would do if He were here in our place. We are therefore to be in the world, as Jesus was in

it. He maintained the heavenly life, without spot, in the midst of all the sin there was about Him. The world made no impression on His holiness, His purity.

Nov. 7.

A USELESS LOVE.

LOVE for God is only a vaporous sentiment, a misty emotion, unless it manifest itself in love for men. Our Lord gave us a picture of the last judgment which at first almost startles us; for, instead of making faith in Himself or love for God the test of men's lives, He makes all turn, in that great final day, upon the way they have treated others in this world. Those who have used their gifts to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to relieve the distress of the poor, the prisoner, the sick, are welcomed into eternal joy. Those who have shut up their hands and hearts, allowing human need and suffering to go unrelieved, are themselves shut away from blessedness.

Nov. 8.

BURDEN MAKING.

THUS I read the duty of giving encouragement. It is the sunshine most lives need. Childhood, youth, struggling genius, fainting

energy, wearied hope, tempted virtue, breaking hearts,—all are waiting for sympathy and cheer. Those who would do good must learn this secret — pastor, teacher, editor, parent. Disheartening words anywhere are treasonable words. They cause fear, anxiety, panic, loss of courage, rout, disaster. There are discouragements enough in most lives already. Let us never add to life's burdens, but let us rather at every possible opportunity breathe cheer, fresh incitement, new courage. He that lives thus, even in the lowliest walk, will make brightness and song wherever he goes, and will have a choral entrance into joy at the end.

Nov. 9.

THE USES OF ADVERSITY.

AFFLICTIONS, sanctified, soften the asperities of life. They tame the wildness of nature. They temper human ambitions. They burn out the dross of selfishness and worldliness. They humble pride. They quell fierce passions. They reveal to men their own hearts, their own weaknesses, faults, blemishes, and perils. They teach patience and submission. They discipline unruly spirits. They deepen and enrich our experiences.

Nov. 10.

LESSONS OF CONSECRATION.

IF we learn well the lesson of consecration, it takes the drudgery out of all duties. It lifts up the commonest intercourse of life into blessed service at Christ's feet. It makes us patient and gentle when dealing with the most disagreeable people. It imparts a high, a divine motive to all friendship and companionship. It teaches us patience amid the interruptions and disarrangements of our plans. It disciplines our wayward wills in little things, and brings them into subjection to Christ. It takes the frivolity out of our conversation. It makes us ever watchful of our influence over others, and of our treatment of them. It makes us ever ready and eager both to receive and impart help and blessing. Then it makes consecration to Christ not a dim, far-away, merely theoretical thing, but a living, practical experience which charges all life with meaning, and which takes hold of the most commonplace things in our prosaic week-day routine, transforming them into beautiful ministries around the feet of God.

Nov. 11.

SIMPLE FAITHFULNESS.

WE have but to take the hours, one by one, as they come, and fill them with simple faithfulness. If we do this, our whole day of

life will at the end be radiant with the splendour of duty well done. But the missing or neglecting of tasks, the dropping and losing of hours and moments, will leave our days and years marred and blemished, and our life-record at the last like a garment that is moth-eaten.

Nov. 12.

GREEN PASTURES.

WHEN we know that Jesus is the Son of God, with all divine attributes, the comfort from the truth of His Humanity is immeasurably enhanced. While He knows all about us, understands our experiences, and sympathises with us in every varying mood and phase of life, He is also able to help us. He is our companion all the way. The arm that is so much comfort to us in its embrace is an everlasting arm. The Friend who is so close, whose love means so much to our hungry heart, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The Man whose feet walked over these earth-paths, and marked out the way for us, is on Heaven's throne, King of kings and Lord of Lords. We need never fear to trust this Saviour.

Nov. 13.

GO, TELL . . . PETER.

JESUS left this special word for Peter with the angel at the tomb, because He knew of the bitterness of His disciple's sorrow. Peter might have been saying, when he heard Jesus had risen, "Perhaps He will not own me any more," and so Jesus sent this message with Peter's name in specially, just to let him know that he was forgiven and would not be cast off. What a world of comfort there is in this "and Peter" for any who have sinned and are penitent! Those who have fallen are the very ones who receive the deepest, tenderest compassion from Jesus, because they need it most, and because He would help them to rise again. The Gospel always has its special word for the penitent: Christ still comes to call the sinner.

Nov. 14.

PROFITABLE HEARING.

THE Bible is simply a book of words; but every word contains a revelation of some beautiful thing in character or attainment which we should strive to reach. We should always gladly, because we may always safely and profitably, hear the words of God. Then we should open our ears to the voice that speaks

in every good book. We should take heed what we hear. Then we must not forget the Master's other counsel, "Take heed *how* ye hear." We should hear thoughtfully, reverently, obediently, telling the good words of God into our heart, that they may transform our life.

Nov. 15.

UNSEEN MESSENGERS.

ANGELS do not now appear to our eyes; but who will say that they do not whisper in our ears many a suggestion which we suppose to come from our own hearts? At least, we know that in some way God will always tell us what to do; and if only we have ears to hear, we shall never fail of guidance. We should always wait for God's bidding before taking any step. Especially in times of danger, when we are moving under His guidance, should we wait and not move until He brings us word.

Nov. 16.

SILENT STRUGGLES.

THERE are sorrows in every life, many of which are inexplicable. There are those whose quietest days are full of struggles of

which their closest friends can know nothing. It is very hard for some people to be good, to resist temptation, to keep sweet under irritation and insult, to maintain purity of heart amid all the enticements of temptation. Nothing else gives such strength and help in hard experiences as knowing of the unfailing sympathy of Christ.

Nov. 17.

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

IF Christ truly be in us, as He lived, we will live; as He ministered to others, we will minister; as He was holy, we will be holy; as He was patient, thoughtful, unselfish, gentle, and kind, so will we be. Christ came to our world to pour divine kindness on weary, needy, perishing human lives. Christ truly in our hearts should send us out on the same mission. And there is need everywhere for love's ministry.

Nov. 18.

A DAY AT A TIME.

IT ought not to be hard to live well one day. Anyone should be able to remember God, and keep his heart open toward heaven, and to

remember others in need and suffering about him, and keep his hand stretched out in helpfulness, for just one day. Yet that is all there is to do. We never have more than one day to live. We have no to-morrows. God never gives us years, or even weeks: He gives us only days. If we live each day well, all our life will, in the end, be radiant and beautiful.

Nov. 19.

THE PRICE OF PERFECTION.

WE need never be afraid of suffering. "Hereunto were ye called." There must be a reason for this in God's thought of us. We know, at least, that we never can reach the best things in life but by the paths of pain. All the richest blessings of grace lie beyond lines of suffering which we must pass to get them. Even of Jesus it is said that He was made perfect through suffering. There were attainments which even He could reach in no other way. All that is worthiest and most Christlike in good men bears the marks of pain upon it. We must pay the price if we would get the blessing.

Nov. 20.

LOST CHANCES.

WHAT blanks are we leaving, you and I, these passing days? What things that we ought to have done for others—things of love, kindness, encouragement, uplifting, cheer, comfort—have we been leaving undone? What things that we ought to have done for our Master—holy living, heroism in duty, firmness in purpose, self-effacement that He may be honoured—have we been omitting?

Nov. 21.

OUR DEBTS.

IF we would join the ranks of those who have lived worthily in the past, and have bequeathed blessing to the world, we must live worthily ourselves, must live unto God, standing faithfully in our lot, loyal to truth and to duty, withholding no price of love in serving others. And this obligation to the future, our own debt to the past lays upon us. Other men laboured, suffered, and we have entered into their labours and sufferings. As we enjoy the fruits of the love and service and faithfulness of those who have gone before us, let us pay our debt to them by love and service and faithfulness,—that will bless those who come after us.

Nov. 22.

GOD OUR SHIELD.

WE are told that the peace of God shall guard our hearts and thoughts. It is a military figure that is suggested. Men sleep in quiet confidence, in their tents, with enemies all about, because waking sentinels keep watch through all the night. Our hearts may be quiet and confident in any danger, because God watches. "The Lord is Thy keeper." "He that keepeth Thee shall not slumber." It is not a mere philosophy of self-control that is taught us. There is a keeping not our own. "The peace of God shall keep your heart and thoughts." It is possible, therefore, for us so to commit all our life's sorrows, cares, and alarms to Christ that the divine love shall wrap us around like a blessed atmosphere, quieting all fear and filling us with holy peace.

Nov. 23.

GIVING, NOT RECEIVING.

WHAT is the love that is the whole of the will of God? Do we really understand it? Do not many of us think only of its earthly side? We like to be loved, that is, to have other people love us and live for us and do things for us. We like the gratifications of love. But that is only miserable selfishness, if it goes no

further. It is a desecration of the sacred name to think that love, at its heart, means getting, receiving. Nay, love gives. Getting is earthly; "as it is in heaven" is giving. That is what God's love does—it finds its blessedness in giving. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." That is what Christ's love did—it poured out its very life-blood to the last drop. The essential meaning of loving must always be giving, not receiving.

Nov. 24.

SECRET PRAYER.

IT was the Master who said, "Enter into thy closet" and "shut thy door" and "pray to thy Father which is in secret." It is in the closet that we get our life renewals. There we may open our heart to God. We never can speak the things of our innermost life in public prayer. Secret prayer is the communing of the individual soul with God. Here it is that godly men and women get their shining faces, the light that breaks through their tears, the strength that makes them victorious in temptation, the power that fits them for Christian work and Christlike serving. The closet of prayer is the holy of holies of each Christian life. The blessing we may receive there is simply immeasurable.

Nov. 25.

THE COST OF KNOWLEDGE.

IF we would be truly and deeply helpful we must be willing to pay the price of the costly tuition. We must learn deeply and long before we can teach well. We must listen intently before we are ready to speak to others. We must be willing to endure temptation, conflict, and struggle with sin, and to get the victory, before we can be succourers to those who are tempted. We must be content to suffer, and must learn to suffer patiently, before we can sing the songs of Christian joy and peace in the ears of the weary. Our own hearts must break to fit us for giving comfort, for only with heart's blood can we heal hearts. God is ready always to anoint for the holy office of helping their fellow-men those who can pay the price.

Nov. 26.

COMPENSATION.

THERE is no doubt that in every loss a gain is offered to us. When God takes away one blessing He gives another. Perhaps the withdrawal of the human object of love makes more room in the heart for God Himself. Or the taking away of the strength which has meant so much to us trains us to more self-

dependence, thus bringing out in us qualities of which hitherto we had been unaware. Or the sorrow itself deepens our spiritual life and enriches our experience, giving us a new power of sympathy through which we may become better comforters and helpers of others.

Nov. 27.

GROWING IN BEAUTY.

ALL the precepts of the Bible are towards the fashioning of beauty in every redeemed life. We are to put away all that is sinful, all marring, every blot and blemish, every unholy desire, feeling, and affection, everything that would defile, and put on whatsoever is lovely and Christlike. The one great work of Christ in Christian lives is the fashioning of holiness in them. We are to grow away from our deformities, our faults and infirmities, our poor dwarfed, stunted life, into spiritual beauty. The mark set before us is the likeness of Christ, which, at last, we shall attain.

Nov. 28.

REAL GROWTH.

TRUE growth in life is not measured by accumulation of wealth, by advance in rank, by increase in power; we are growing

only when passing days leave us richer-hearted, nobler-spirited, more Christlike in character. Ruskin puts it thus: "He only is advancing in life whose heart is growing softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace."

Nov. 29.

KEEP A BRAVE HEART.

HARD work should never drive laughter out of the soul. We should keep a happy heart amid the severest toil. We should sing at our work. We will work better and far more effectively if we keep the music always ringing within our breast. "A sad heart tires in a mile," runs the old song. "The joy of the Lord is your strength," said the Tirshatha to the people, as he urged them to rejoicing. Joy of spirit makes burdens seem lighter and tasks easier.

Nov. 30.

THE MINISTRY OF INFLUENCE.

THE light of good cheer that shines in our face as we pass victoriously through the hard things of our condition, puts hope into other discouraged hearts. The faith that fails not when things seem dark, that meets sorrow

and suffers, but is not crushed, helps the faith of others who are in like experiences. Life is contagious. Courage in one struggler makes all others who know him braver. Joy in one spirit kindles joy in many other spirits. The ministry of influence is silent, but it never intermits. By day and by night it goes on, while men wake and while they sleep. Even death does not interrupt it; but when the voice is hushed, when the hands are folded, it continues to bless and inspire others.

DECEMBER

It is not the deed we do,
Though the deed be never so fair,
But the love that the dear Lord looketh for,
Hidden with lowly care
In the heart of the deed so fair.

Behold us, the rich and the poor,
Dear Lord, in Thy service draw near;
One consecrateth a precious coin,
One droppeth only a tear;
Look, Master, the love is here!

Christina Rossetti.

DECEMBER

Dec. 1.

AS THY DAYS, THY STRENGTH.

MANY young people are afraid to set out on a Christian life because, foreseeing its dangers, they dread them, and fear that they will not be able to stand faithful and true to the end. They need only to be faithful day by day, trusting God. They will obtain help for every duty, for every hour of danger, for every struggle. The help will come silently, secretly, just as it is needed, always grace sufficient, so that they shall be able to stand unto the end. The way to obtain help of God is to go faithfully and promptly forward in the way of duty, asking for the help, and sure of getting it. It will come only as we do His will.

Dec. 2.

ONE STEP ENOUGH.

WE never know what lies before us. Sorrow may be waiting, or sore temptation or death. We see not a step before our

feet. But no matter, if God is leading, for He knows all that lies before us. As we go on He makes each step plain; and is not that enough?

A young man had almost decided to become a Christian. But one doubt held him back: he did not see how he could continue faithful all through his life. He spent an evening with his minister, and they talked long on the subject. Still his fears and his indecision remained. As he left, the pastor observed how dark it was, and, getting a lantern, handed it to the young man, saying: "This little light will not show at once the whole way to your home, but only one step at a time; yet take that step, and you will reach home in safety." As the young man walked homeward he pondered, "Why can I not trust my heavenly Father, even if I can't see my way clear to the end, if He gives me light for one step?"

Dec. 3.

"NEARER THAN HANDS OR FEET."

HUMAN souls in this world are like blind men, groping in the darkness, trying to find some hand to lead them, some path to take

them home. We are without God in this world, like

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

Without the gospel we cannot find God. At the same time, He is not far from any one of us. There is a story of a returning prodigal seeking his father's house and unable to find it, wandering wearily along the highway, and at last in his faintness falling down on the threshold of a cottage which was his own father's house. Inside sat the father and mother for whose love he was so hungering; yet he knew it not. So near to every one of us in our need and craving is our heavenly Father.

Dec. 4.

SELFISH SOULS.

THERE is a time for holy services, for heavenly communings, but the purpose of such joy is to prepare us for better work out in the world. We are not to spend all our time at prayer and in communings; but, having had our secret warmed with love, we must go to carry the news of God's grace and love to others. No selfishness is quite so bad as that

shown in keeping to ourselves the divine goodness. Whittier says—

"Heaven's gate is closed to him who comes alone;
Save thou a soul, and it shall save thine own."

Dec. 5.

WORKING IN LOVE.

THERE is no other way in which one's life will so surely and so quickly become transfigured as in the faithful, happy, cheerful doing of everyday tasks. We need to remember that this world is not so much a place for doing things as for making character. The doing of common tasks patiently, promptly, faithfully, cheerfully, makes the character beautiful and bright. But we must take heed always that we do our tasks, whatever they are, with love. Doing any kind of work unwillingly, fretfully, with complaint and murmuring, hurts the life.

Dec. 6.

UNNOTICED BLESSINGS.

HOW many of us find all the good there is in our lot? Do we extract the honey from every flower that blooms in our path? Do we find all the gold that lies in the hard

rocks over which our feet stumble? Do we behold all the beauty that glows along the ways of our sore toil? Do not many good things pass through our hands and slip away from us for ever before we even recognise their loveliness or their worth? Do not angels come to us unaware in homely disguise, walk with us, talk with us, minister to us, and then only become known to us when their place is empty and they have spread their radiant wings in flight which we have no power ever to recall?

Dec. 7.

BEACONS.

WE should never lose an opportunity to say an inspiring word. We do not know how much it is needed or how great and far-reaching its consequences may be. One night long ago, during a terrible storm on the coast of England, a clergyman left his own cosy home, hurried away to the headland and lighted the beacon. Months afterwards, he learned that that light had saved a great ship with its freight of human life. We know not to what imperilled interests and hopes our one word or act of encouragement may carry rescue and safety. Nor do we know what destinies may be wrecked and lost by our failure to speak cheer.

Dec. 8.

PRAYER IN THE HOME.

MUCH is said and written of religion in the home, and yet it may be that there is not always a clear conception of the meaning of the term. It is sometimes supposed that the requirement is fully met when family devotions are regularly maintained. This is of vital importance. Household religion certainly implies the daily family worship. I cannot think that any home realises the true ideal, or can have Heaven's richest benedictions upon it, in which this is omitted or neglected. God blesses and shelters the household in which He is honoured. Prayer weaves a roof of love over the home, and builds walls of protection about it.

Dec. 9.

LIFE'S PROSE.

ALL of us must go out from the sweet services of the Sabbath into a week of very real and very prosaic life. We must mingle with people that are not angels. We must pass through experiences that will naturally worry and vex us. Those about us, either willingly or unwillingly, annoy and try us. Many a young Christian must mingle with those who do not love Christ. Everyone meets many

anxieties and worries in ordinary week-day life. There are continual irritations and annoyances. The problem is, to live a beautiful Christian life in the face of all these hindrances.

Dec. 10.

GOLDEN YEARS.

A COMPLETE life, altogether beautiful in God's sight, is one that from earliest childhood to ripest old age does the work of the Lord. To waste the early golden years of youth is to leave a blank that never can be filled. For we have no second chances in life. Says Dr. Geikie: "Some things God gives often; some He gives only once. The seasons return again and again, and the flowers change with the months; but youth comes twice to none." The same is true of any period of life, any day, any hour; it comes not twice, and its work neglected at the time can never be done.

Dec. 11.

LOVE'S SWEET SPICES.

WHEN we are wronged or hurt or treated injuriously, if we would honour our blessed Lord we must endure with sweet forgiveness and patience. Love is always sweet,

even when it meets only answering love; but it is never so sweet to Christ as when it meets unkindness, wrong, injustice, cruelty, and still remains gentle and tender, bathing in fragrance the hand that smites. To endure thus is to bring sweet spices for Jesus. The women brought spices to strew on the body of a dead Christ. We may bring love, devotion, service, submission, and endurance to honour a Christ who was dead for us but is now for us also alive for evermore.

Dec. 12.

HOPE ALWAYS.

CHRIST ever calls to hope. He bids us rise again from the worst defeat. In the kingdom of grace there is always margin enough to start again, and to build up a noble life. Even down to life's latest hour this remains true. The door of opportunity opened to the penitent even on the cross in his dying hour; there was no time to make anything good or beautiful of his life on the earth, save in His dying confession and testimony; but the eternity into which he passed is very long, with time enough for a glorious career. So it is always. In this world, blessed by divine love and grace, there is never any need for despair. The call after any defeat or failure still is: "Rise up, let us go."

Dec. 13.

THE BEST THINGS.

THE first thing is to gather into our life all the truly great and noble things of character. Here are two texts to ponder, because they settle this question: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report,—think on these things"—"Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity."

Dec. 14.

THE REVELATION OF GOD.

THE reason for the Incarnation was the salvation of man. The Good Shepherd came to seek and to save His sheep which were lost. He came in human form that He might get nearer to the sinner. A Moravian missionary went to preach the gospel to the slaves in the West Indies. Failing as a free man to reach them, he became a slave himself, and went with them to their toils in the field, and into all their hardships and sufferings, thus getting close to them. Then they listened to him. This illus-

trates Christ's condescension to save the world. We could not understand God in His invisible glory; and Immanuel came, and in human form lived out the divine life, showing us God's thoughts and character and feelings, especially God's grace and His love for sinners. This was one object of the Incarnation,—it revealed in a way which men could understand the invisible things of God.

Dec. 15.

PRACTICAL LOVE.

A VERY little love for our neighbour wrought out in a bit of every-day kindness is worth a great deal of talk about love which finds no expression in act. To be kind and charitable, to give bread to the hungry, to deny one's self a pleasure in order to help another over a hard place, to go far out of one's way to be of use to another who is in need, are better evidence of the indwelling of the Spirit than any amount of effervescent talk about consecration in a prayer meeting.

Dec. 16.

BE KIND NOW.

SURELY we should learn the lesson of gentle thoughtful kindness to those we love, and to all we meet in life's busy ways. And we

should show the kindness, too, while their tired feet walk in life's toilsome paths, and not wait to bring flowers for their coffins, or to speak words of cheer when their ears are closed, and their hearts are stilled, and it is too late to give them comfort and joy.

Dec. 17.

HEART AND LIFE.

WHAT we are in heart, in spirit, in the inner life, we are really before God; and that, too, we shall ultimately become in actual character, in outward feature. The disposition makes the face, jealousy, envy, bitterness, selfishness all write their own image and signature on the features, if you give them time enough. A pure, beautiful soul builds a holy and divine dwelling for itself. The lamp of Christ's love, set in a human heart, transforms the life from sinfulness and earthliness into the likeness of Christ's own Spirit.

Dec. 18.

A TALISMAN.

WE should remember that no one can really hurt our life but ourselves. Men may rob us of our money. They may injure us in

many ways. They may cut our bodies to pieces. But they cannot touch our real life. All the wrongs they can inflict upon us will do us no actual injury. But if we give way to anger, if we let bitterness creep into our hearts, if we grow unforgiving or resentful, we have hurt ourselves. If, on the other hand, we keep love in our hearts under all the human wrong we suffer, we have won the victory over every wrong.

Dec. 19.

PLATO'S WISH.

PLATO expressed a desire that the moral law might become a living personage, that men seeing it thus incarnate might be charmed by its beauty. Plato's wish was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The holiness and the beauty of the divine law were revealed in Him. The Beatitudes contain an outline of the ideal life, but the Beatitudes are only a rescript of the life of Christ Himself. What He taught about love was but His own love stated in a course of living lessons for His friends to learn. When He said we should be patient, gentle, thoughtful, forgiving, and kind, He was only saying "Follow Me."

Dec. 20.

GOD'S BOOK.

SO long as there are tears and sorrows, and broken hearts and crushed hopes and human failures, and lives burdened and bowed down, and spirits sad and despairing, so long will the Bible be a book believed in as of God—an inspired book, and full of inspiration, light, help, and strength for earth's weary ones.

Dec. 21.

PAYING THE PRICE.

TO love always involves suffering, sooner or later, for one or other of the friends, for there must some time be separation. One must be taken and the other left. To have known of the sorrow and loneliness, and to have shut one's heart against the friendship in dread of its loss, would have been to rob one's life of its best blessing. Even grief is not too great a price to pay for love. Love's blessing stays in the life when the beloved one is gone. Its influence is permanent. The work it does is on the soul's very substance, and abides for ever. Its impression is ineffaceable.

Dec. 22.

A BOLD PRAYER.

"AS it is in heaven" may seem far above us to-day. The song is too sweet for our unmusical voice to sing. The life is too beautiful for us, with our imperfect, inharmonious nature, to live. But if only we are true to our Christian faith, if only we strive ever to do our Father's will, if only we keep our heart ever open to the love of Christ and to the help and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, we shall rise day by day toward heaven's perfectness, until at last we shall enter the pearl gates and be with Christ and be like Him. For the present our striving and our prayer should ever be: "Thy will be done on earth, in us, as it is done in heaven."

Dec. 23.

THOUGHTLESSNESS.

NO doubt much evil is wrought by want of thought. Many people with kindly heart continually cause pain to others by mere heedlessness. They seem to have no perception of the sensibilities of those about them. They have never trained themselves to think at all of others in connection with their own words and acts. They have accustomed themselves to

think only of their own pleasure, and to say and do only what their own impulses prompt, without asking whether others will be pleased or displeased. They think only of their own comfort and convenience, and never of how the thing they wish to do may break into the comfort or convenience of others.

Dec. 24.

LOSING TO SAVE.

HAD Jesus saved His life from the Cross He might have lived to a ripe old age, making all His years beautiful as the three or four He wrought in such wondrous way among the people. But there would have been no Cross lifted up to draw all men to it by its power of love. There would have been no fountain opened to which earth's penitent millions could come with their polluted lives to find cleansing. There would have been no atonement for human guilt, no tasting of death by the Son of God for every man, no bearing by the Lamb of God of the sin of the world. There would have been no broken grave with its victory over death, and eternal life for all who will believe.

Dec. 25.

THE GREAT QUEST.

THAT was the most wonderful birth that ever occurred in this world. It was the Son of God incarnate that slept His first sleep in the manger of Bethlehem. We should certainly come with the shepherds and the Magi to pay our homage at the cradle of this same glorious Child-King. The Magi came hundreds of miles to find Christ. The journey was difficult and perilous, and very costly. We ought to count no toil or sacrifice too great to find Christ. We ought to be ready to go thousands of miles, if need be, to find Him. He is the pearl of great price, and we shall be well repaid for our quest, though it cost us the loss and sacrifice of all things, and though we even have to lay down our lives to gain Him.

Dec. 26.

VICTORY OVER SORROW.

WE cannot but feel the pangs of grief—God will never blame us for our tears, but in our deepest afflictions our faith should not fail, and the songs of joy should not be choked. People are looking upon us and, consciously or unconsciously, watching to see what Christ can do for us in our sore stress. To witness

truly for Him we must suffer victoriously, be more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Dec. 27.

CHERISH NO RESENTMENT.

SOMETIMES men insist on using our life or our work as a footpath to some goal or ambition of their own. Naturally we resent such injustice. But, after all, need we vex ourselves overmuch about such treatment? If only we keep sweet, not allowing the wrong or the injustice to embitter us, cherishing ever the spirit of cheerful, patient love, we are the gainers. The man who does the mean or oppressive thing is the man who loses. He gathers a curse in his hands with the seeming gain he selfishly snatches. We need only to watch that no bitterness enter our heart, enduring the wrong as our Master endured, patiently, committing ourselves to Him that judgeth righteously.

Dec. 28.

ENDURING QUALITIES.

THE winds and storms make the well-rooted tree stand all the more firmly. So it is with the Christian life which is truly rooted in

Christ. It has its temptations, its trials, its struggles, but they only strengthen it, making it cleave to Christ the more closely and firmly, and grow into all the more beautiful character. But if our faith is feeble, if our religion is one of feeling only instead of principle, if we are ruled by the emotions instead of by the power of an inner life, then we shall not be able to endure the storms, and shall faint and fall under their sweep and strain.

Dec. 29.

TRANSFORMED SORROWS.

ALONG the shore one sometimes comes upon fresh-water springs, which bubble up on the edge of the salt sea. The tides roll over them and bury them out of sight for the time, but when the brackish floods ebb again the springs are found sweet as ever. So, after the deepest sorrow should the heart's fountains of joy be found, still pouring out their streams of gladness. Christ says much about the people having His joy, a joy which the world can neither give nor take away. He says, too, that their sorrow shall be turned into joy, meaning that the deepest joy in this world is transformed sorrow, and not the joy which has never known pain.

Dec. 30.

CONSIDERING OTHERS.

THERE are some Christians who seem never to have learned love's secret of helpfulness. There is nothing that this sorrowing, sinning world needs more than gentleness,—gentleness like that of Him of whom it is written, that He would not break a bruised reed. We need to pray for the grace of gentleness, that we may walk softly among men, never hurting another life by harsh word or ungentle act.

Dec. 31.

PERILS OF PRAYERLESSNESS.

THERE are times when every star seems to have gone out, and when clouds and darkness appear to have gathered about us, hiding every waymark, so that we cannot see any way out of the gloom and perplexity. We need then to have God's direction, or we shall perish. In the darkest hour of Christ's life, when He could not see even His father's face, and cried out like one forsaken, He still kept His faith in God firm and strong. It was still, "My God, my God." But while there are times when we need guidance in an unusual way, there is no day in all our brightest year when we do not need it, when we dare to go

forward one step without it. The day we do not seek and obtain God's leading will be a day of disaster for us. The day we go forth without prayer for divine blessing, when we do not lay our hand in Christ's as we go out into the great world, is a day of peril for us.

Printed by Morrison & Gibb Ltd., Edinburgh
Great Britain